

Ecclesiastes 2:3

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[0 : 00] Chapter 2, beginning in verse 1. I said in my heart, Come now, I will test you with pleasure. Enjoy yourself. But behold, this also was vanity.

I said of laughter it is mad, and of pleasure what use is it? I searched my heart how to cheer my body with wine, my heart still guiding me with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. I made myself gardens and parks and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees.

I bought male and female slaves and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem.

I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines the delight of the sons of man.

[1 : 10] So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired, I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil.

Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it. And behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

This is God's Word to us. It was written for His glory and for our good. And we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Now this morning our focus is going to be just on verse 3. And we'll probably speed to the end of verse 11 in the coming weeks, but this morning I want to look at verse 3.

And let me read just that verse to you again. I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine, my heart still guiding me with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly or silliness till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life.

[2 : 27] Note first in the text the brevity of life. How very brief life is. If you splice verse 3 and put it back together, you could read, I searched with my heart till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life.

James writes in James 4.14, What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. If we don't understand how very brief our lives are, we will not understand how insignificant what we can accomplish under the sun truly is.

Our perspective will be horribly inadequate if we do not consider the measure of our days in the scope of eternity. You are just a man.

You are just a woman. And your life here and now is fleeting. It's vanishing. It's like a vapor in the wind. It will go so rapidly in comparison to eternity.

David in Psalm 39, 4-7 prays this, O Lord, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days.

[3 : 48] Let me know how fleeting I am. His prayer is, he cries out to God that he would understand that very thing. How brief his life is.

Verse 5, Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths and my lifetime is as nothing before you. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath.

Surely a man goes about as a shadow. Surely for nothing they are in turmoil. Man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather. And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?

So here's the result of him understanding the brevity of his life. My hope is in you. As he looks at eternity, as he steps back away and he sees how very brief his life is and understands the scope of the rest of it, the beyond under the sun, he sees the weighty matter that's before him and he knows

that he must hope in God.

Remember the conclusion of our preacher, Ecclesiastes 12.13. After he's weighed all of this out in all of the preceding chapters, he says, the end of the matter all has been heard.

[5 : 03] Fear God and keep His commandments. For this is the whole duty of man. Beloved, we spend far too much time acting as if this life has great weight in what we can accomplish under the sun.

So many of us, particularly those of you who are young, live as if you're invincible and that what's happening here and now is of the greatest and ultimate value.

And it's not. We need to rightly have our minds and hearts put in proper perspective. Seeing that we serve an eternal God who has an eternal purpose and plan and we should live for that now.

So the beginning of verse 3 presents a joy, a self-indulgent pleasure, a thing that the king sought after, trying to understand, if this is a thing worth finding value in, worth finding gain in.

We know already his conclusion, but it's still right and proper that we look at the why. Why does he still come to that conclusion? First, the beginning of verse 3 presents some challenges for us in interpretation.

[6 : 31] It's structured very interestingly. We have to ask the question and kind of waffle between is the preacher talking about partying or is the preacher talking about appreciating.

He says, I search with my heart how to cheer my body with wine. But then we get this insertion, my heart still guiding me with wisdom and how to lay hold on folly.

So it's interesting and scholars, commentators, kind of line up in different places on the text. Is he talking about inebriation or is he talking about sophistication?

Some suggest that he's simply partying until he drops and then he's later assessing the value of that. His heart's still guiding him with wisdom.

He goes through the experience, he sees what is the end of this temporal pleasure and then he stops and weighs it out and considers was this something to be gained under the sun and then he does it again.

[7 : 44] I can see why. I can understand that. I think there's probably at least a part of that happening here for the preacher. The reason I would say is because beyond that insertion it says in how to lay hold on folly.

Right? In the pursuit of cheering his body with wine he also wants to lay hold on folly or foolishness or silliness is the type of partying that comes with inebriation of value.

I also can see the sophistication argument. This insertion, my heart's still guiding me with wisdom.

That he was appreciating the brewing process and what could be produced from it.

That he was sampling the various notes and flavor that could be found in wine. That he was becoming a connoisseur of this thing. That he was pursuing it as a hobby.

And I think probably both are true. Ecclesiastes 1.13 read it to you just a moment ago says, And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven.

[9 : 03] And so I think he explores both sides of what wine has to offer humanity. And so we'll look at it in that way in those two ways. The vanity of inebriation as well as the vanity of sophistication.

So the vanity of inebriation. I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine and if you delete the insertion and how to lay hold on folly.

Now beloved, the Bible gives many strong warnings against the foolishness of out of proportion drinking. Listen to a few.

Proverbs 21 wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

Isaiah 5 22 and I really like this one. Isaiah says, woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and valiant men in mixing strong drink.

[10 : 13] Proverbs 23 23. Turn here with me to verse 29. Proverbs 23 29-35 who has woe?

Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

And then here verse 30 and on is the answer to those questions. Those who tarry long over wine. Those who go to try mixed wine.

Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things and your heart utter perverse things.

You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. They struck me, you will say, but I was not hurt.

[11 : 20] They beat me, but I did not feel it. So there's this abuse happening to the drinker, right, to the person who's abusing alcohol. But their logic is perverted.

That's what he's saying, right? They struck me, I wasn't hurt. They beat me, I didn't feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink. There's this unending cycle of sorrow for those who drown their sorrow in addiction.

And it's a great problem. The addict medicates to ease the woes of life. But their endless medicating heaps up for them more woes.

Strong drink and the abuse of it is a great danger. A great danger. The Scripture is clear on this for us. Further, Christian people, those who profess to follow Christ are not to be drunkards.

1 Corinthians 5, 11-13, Paul writes, But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual morality or greed or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler, not even to eat with such a one.

[12 : 45] For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. Purge the evil person from among you.

And Paul is not saying that if we fail at any of these points, that if you know someone who claims to follow Christ, who at one time got drunk, that you're to have nothing to do with them, that the church should judge them, that there should be discipline placed upon them.

But what he's saying is those who are unrepentant in these things, those who pick up these things as habits, are giving evidence that they're not found, in Christ. And it is the job of the church to not associate with them as the church.

Not that we don't love and wrap our arms around those people, but we don't endorse their sin in so doing. Christians are not to be drunkards.

So can the Christian drink? Are you young people? If you're under 21, no. I cannot tell you how many stupid conversations I've been in with people under 21 about drinking.

[13 : 54] No, it's illegal. You cannot. If you are 21 or older, yes, the answer is yes. I could get myself in all kinds of trouble as a Southern Baptist preacher.

I'm saying that, but some stances made by denominations are wrong. Some gray areas, people have tried to make black and white, and it's not okay.

Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine. And don't come at me with Greek arguments about what he turned it into. He didn't turn it into grape juice.

He turned it into wine. It was actually said that it was the best wine, which meant it was the strong wine that he turned it into. In fact, he turned it into 120 to 180 gallons of wine.

It was a party. Paul commends to Timothy the drinking of wine for his health. 1 Timothy 5.23 It's a parenthetical in our English text.

[14 : 53] No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. The Scripture nowhere forbids the drinking, but don't forget the strong case made against the danger of it.

Please don't set that apart in your mind, young people. There's strong warning given in the Scripture. About what drink can do. But drinking in moderation is okay.

I hear the argument often on the other side of the coin. Those who want to be licentious in their drinking, who are Christians, say for those of us who choose not to drink, that we're not practicing our liberty, that we have somehow denied the freeness we have in the Gospel, which is total hogwash.

I can choose not to drink, which I do, just to clear that up for you. For myself, I choose not to drink, which is a practicing of my liberty in Christ.

It's not a law placed upon me by my denomination, but it's rather something that I freely choose to do in Christ. It is a practicing of my liberty.

[16 : 05] Don't think that if you decide not to drink that you're denying the freedom you have in the Gospel. Romans chapter 14. In light of much debate in that day over the consumption of food offered to idols, as well as the consumption of foods prohibited by Old Testament ceremonial law, there was lots of hubbub about food and drink in the day in the early church.

And Paul writes, beginning in verse 20 of Romans 14, do not for the sake of food destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he

eats.

It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God.

Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith, for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

And I bring that text to you to say that in the culture in which we live, which is very split on the issue of alcohol, we should be very wise in our day.

[17 : 26] In fact, I would say to you, as you consider your freedom in Christ, as you consider the gray area here, that if you have doubt in your mind, don't.

If you're in a given situation and you're just not sure, if you're just considering the issue altogether and you're just not sure, don't. The text says, verse 23, but whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats because the eating is not from faith.

I believe we have much reason to doubt. Not making a case that you can't. I'm just making a case that maybe you shouldn't. So hear that.

Hear the freedom in it, but hear the strong warning as well. We're to be a people set apart. There is a vanity in over consumption of alcohol, to be sure.

There's also a vanity in sophistication of it. we know, many of us here know, many people, I believe, at least I know that I do, who really have taken up craft beer as their thing.

[18 : 38] They're going to try them all and know them all and very proud that they know them all. And I'm not saying that they can't do this thing, but there's no real value found in it.

This little phrase in the middle of verse 3, my heart still guiding me with wisdom. And as I said, I think both things are going on. I think he probably at times was becoming drunk and seeing the vanity of that, and at times he was not becoming drunk, but rather drinking in moderation and then soberly and thoughtfully accessing his experience.

Is this one good? Is this one lend to joy? What is the strength? What is the particular alcohol content that I appreciate and enjoy? So whether in sophistication or in inebriation, there is no gain. Neither the connoisseur nor the drunkard can find true gain at the bottom of a glass. Now the thought that the preacher possibly pursued gain in his sophistication in wine leads me to consider, to go a little bit beyond the idea of just alcohol, just wine, just the vanity of hobbies.

Now many of us may not endeavor to be connoisseurs of wine or craft beer or anything else of fine cheeses. You ever seen at Ingalls the olive bar at Ingalls?

[20 : 11] Who in our culture eats that many different kinds of olives and shops at Ingalls? I don't understand. Twelve different types of olives at Ingalls.

Maybe there are some connoisseurs of olives amongst us, maybe even today. Those of you not laughing, maybe. We can have any number of various hobbies, things that we pursue, things that we seek to become experts in.

And beloved, there's not ultimate value in these things either. Now hear me, I'm saying ultimate value, there can be some value, there's some value in enjoyment, there's some value in disconnecting, in creating.

My wife is a wonderful painter, I'm so thankful for the production of beauty that she creates in our home from the paintings that she does. For me, not so much now, but, oh gosh, over a decade ago now, the hobbies that I pursued in an unhealthy manner that I looked for gain in were rock climbing and whitewater kayaking.

And I know there's some people in our congregation that like to do both of these things. I loved it. And in fact, I loved it to the degree that I sought to find all of my identity in it.

[21 : 35] I was Nathan who was firstly a rock climber and a whitewater kayaker. I can remember going to have an injury assessed by a doctor who asked me how I got the injury.

He was a surgeon. I didn't get a surgery, but we were considering it. And he started to share with me how much he had climbed in college. He'd done some amazing things. He'd gotten to go some wonderful places and do some rather advanced rock climbing.

And I said, do you still climb? And he said, oh no, insurance premiums are just way too high now.

And I can remember at the time just thinking what a betrayer of his own identity he was.

But he rightly saw it as a hobby. He rightly saw it as a thing he enjoyed doing one day. And he was able to put it back down at another time. For those of you who are climbers amongst us, those of

you who aren't, this will make no sense.

Not that I was the best of climbers, but I bouldered V8. I was leading sport 5.11, looking to push into 5.12s. I loved to climb. I was really disappointed if I didn't climb at least three times a week.

[22 : 48] And I wanted at least two of those times to be outdoors. Ask some people who were close to me in those days, if I was gone, it was where I was at. I was usually climbing somewhere. There was always someone better than me.

There was always another grade, another level to achieve. There would be all of the passion and pursuit of being able to accomplish something. And when I accomplished it, there was a brief moment of joy and then another turning to another goal and another endeavor.

I started getting into whitewater kayaking because I had nothing to do on days that it rained. I needed to go pursue adrenaline in another way. I empowered class 5 whitewater.

I became an American Canoe Association whitewater kayak instructor. I heavily invested myself into these things. Spent countless hours pursuing these activities.

And it had no ultimate value. Pull some things out of it. Some things, some little things to grasp onto, but no ultimate value. Not saying that you can't have hobbies, what I am saying is that your hobby ought not be your God.

[24 : 05] And you need to really carefully assess if the stuff that you pursue to be sophisticated in, to be the expert in, grab your attention in a way that it diverts it from God.

Praise God through a number of injuries and through a decade plus of chronic pain. I don't really get to do these things anymore. And sometimes I'm jealous.

I want to. I see you guys going and having fun. I really want to get in the middle of that. But one of the goods, and I believe there are many, but one of the great goods in that is that God exposed my heart as He took something away from me that I worshipped.

And beloved, there is greater joy than anything in this world that you could possibly throw your energy into and endeavor to be. I could have been the best rock climber in the world.

I could have been going off the highest waterfalls better than anyone else, setting world records, having all of the acclaim in every magazine, the star of all the videos, and yet it would have been meaningless.

[25 : 13] There's greater joy, and that joy is found in Christ. In Nehemiah chapter 8, the people of God are urged to eat the fat and drink sweet rind to celebrate the holiness of the day.

But then it reminds them that true strength is found in the joy of the Lord, a deep and an abiding joy, a joy that's not based on circumstance that cannot be taken from you ever, is found in Christ.

That's why the prophet Isaiah cries out to us in chapter 55, verses 1 and 2, Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come, buy and eat.

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food.

There is a food, and a drink that comes from God and ultimately satisfies. Jesus says to a Samaritan woman at a well in John 4, 13-14, Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again.

[26 : 31] Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. Jesus stands up in the midst of a great feast and says in John 7, 37, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

If you are in Christ, Christ is to be your supreme satisfaction. He is our gain. He gives life meaning. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to fear God and to keep His commandments. If you're not in Christ, you're chasing around trying to find joy and satisfaction and meaning in this world, you're going to come up dry.

You will not find the answer apart from Christ. You will not understand the proper and right created order. We have a good and loving kind creator that you have made your enemy by your activity and you need reconciliation in Christ.

To pull back in my kayaking days and an analogy for you, there's a river that's on the border of Georgia and South Carolina called the Chattooga and there's a section of the Chattooga called the Five Falls and it is what it sounds like, a series of rapids back to back to back which are so much fun.

[27 : 56] It makes me want to be there right now just thinking about doing the Five Falls. In the middle of one of those rapids there's this eddy that you can catch, which an eddy is a spot you stop

on the river.

Boy, I just stepped out ahead of some of you. But below that eddy is what we call a sieve where all the water drains through a hole and usually there's all kinds of logs and all kinds of junk in a sieve and you do not want to be in that spot.

People drown and die going into sieves. And if you pull into this eddy you have to do what's called the hairy fairy. Am I remembering this rapid correctly Wes?

Okay, I am. And it's called the hairy fairy because you have to go above that sieve and a fairy is when you're pointing upstream and you're moving across the river. Okay, the sieve's behind you when you're in the middle of this rapid doing this thing and it is a real danger.

It is there and you have to be aware of it. You don't take somebody through the five falls that's never been through the five falls and not explain these types of things to them. You don't say, hey, follow me into this place and not have them realize what will happen if they don't do the hairy fairy properly, if they don't stay upstream of that sieve.

[29 : 07] It's not a place you want to be. If you're not found in Christ, hear me say this to you, there is a danger at the end of your brief life and it is eternal damnation.

It is bearing the weight of God's wrath forever because you're his enemy. That's where we are on the river. the rescue, the way around is Christ.

If you are in Christ, you must treasure him up the way he deserves to be treasured, the way he ought to be treasured because it's for your good and it's for the good of the world.

The vision statement for our church is that we exist, Christ Family Church exists to glorify God, to bring a claim to his name by experiencing, proclaiming, and displaying the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things to all peoples.

Wes and I at the beginning of this semester got the joy of receiving a rather scathing email from a young lady who just really didn't enjoy our worship service.

[30 : 23] And it was shocking to me for two reasons. Firstly, that she had the audacity as an 18-year-old to speak to the leadership of a church the way that she did. Shame on her father for not raising her better.

But also that she so misunderstood so much of what we did together. And she was very upset about the vision statement of our church.

Just didn't wrap her mind around it at all. And so let me help you this morning by saying to you that if you're in Christ, there should be a real and a day-to-day experience of the supremacy, the great value of Jesus Christ.

It should be something that we experience. It should be a real thing for us. Not a philosophical idea that's out there. But that we are walking with him day by day by day.

That we are experiencing this supremacy. And out of that comes proclamation that we will say things that are true of who he is. The things that we enjoy, that we like to talk most about.

[31 : 27] Jesus will be on our lips. And we'll display him in the way that we live our lives. We'll orient ourselves differently because he is our treasure. Because he is supreme to us.

And this will be the case in all things. And it will be the case to all peoples. This is meant to be the practice experience of the Christian life. And I think that the challenge for so many of us is that we don't experience the supremacy of Christ in the day to day because we don't engage ourselves in the activities of a Christian in the day to day.

You don't know how you encounter Jesus today and tomorrow and all of the days that follow? In four ways. Read the scripture.

This attests as the word of God to the word of God who is Christ. You see and you behold him here. This is where he speaks to us.

You communicate to him in prayer. You lay down the burden of your day. You give back to him what is due him in praise in prayer. You say to him, I am just a man and I am nothing without prayer.

[32 : 39] You fellowship with the church. And I don't just mean showing up and consuming an event. I mean fellowship. You live in life, in the day to day, in the going and coming of the life of a congregation.

In all the varying ways that that happens, you fellowship with the church. And thirdly, you obey. You do all those other things that we're meant to be doing and obedience necessarily leads to suffering.

And you meet Christ in suffering. Our king, our lord, came to this earth and was hated. He was despised and he was murdered. This is the way the world should perceive us.

Not a, well, we're American kind of a way of suffering. But no, the world should really despise us.

The world really should look at Christians here and say, what an unsavory people.

How much we don't enjoy them. And you know why? Because we tell them that they're wrong. In the way that we live and in what we say. We call evil, evil.

[33 : 49] We point it out. Not because we're self-righteous and we're judgmental, but because we care. Because we know of the danger to come. It's been shown to us and we've been rescued from it.

And so we share this with people. We live for righteousness and we call evil, evil. People are not going to like that. Our Christian culture will not like that.

If you can tell people who follow, say they follow Christ, that they're not really following Christ, you won't be popular. Is that okay? Do you want Jesus to that degree?

That you're willing to follow Him into whatever storm He takes you into? For His glory and for the good of all people. I'm going to read to you in closing from Pilgrim's Progress.

I told you it was coming out. If you're a guest today, you're not familiar, I haven't talked to you at all.

Pilgrim's Progress was written by a man named John Bunyan. It's an allegory.

[34 : 51] It's told as a dream, a dream of a man named Christian who's making a journey to the celestial city. At this point in our story, he's picked up a traveler whose name is Faithful.

And they've gone through a town, through a portion of a town called Vanity Fair. So you get the tie-in to Ecclesiastes. Vanity Fair.

And I read, Now these pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this fair. Well, so they did, but behold, even as they entered into the fair, all the people in the fair were moved and the town itself, as it were, in a hubbub about them, and that for several reasons.

For first, the pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. They looked different. The people, therefore, of the fair made a great gazing upon them.

Some said they were fools, some they were bedlems, and some they were outlandish men.

Second, as they wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech.

[36 : 01] For few could understand what they said. They naturally spoke the language of Canaan, but they that kept the fair were the men of this world, so that from one end of the fair to the other they seemed barbarians each to each other.

Third, but that which did not a little amuse the merchandisers was that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares. They cared not so much as to look upon them, and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears and cry, turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and look upward, signifying that their trade and traffic was in heaven.

One chants mockingly, beholding the carriage of the men to say unto them, what will ye buy? But they, looking gravely upon him, said, we buy the truth.

At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more, some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling upon others to smite them. At last things came to a hubbub, and great stir in the fair, insomuch that all order was confounded.

Now was word presently brought to the great one of the fair, who quickly came down and deputed some of his most trusty friends to take these men into examination, about whom the fair was almost overturned.

[37 : 27] So they disrupt the fair, and they're subsequently arrested. And there is a caging of them, an imprisonment, there's a trial, which I'm going to skip over the top of, but it's so good, and you really, really need to read it.

And then we pick up here. The judge says, Thou runagate, heretic, and traitor, hast thou heard what these honest gentlemen have witnessed against thee?

This is the trial of faithful. Faithful says, May I speak a few words in my own defense? The judge replies, thou deservest to live no longer, but to be slain immediately upon the place.

Yet that all men may see our gentleness towards thee, let us hear what thou hast to say. Faithful says, I say then, in an answer to what Mr.

Envy has spoken, there's great character names in all this, to what Mr. Envy has spoken, I never said aught but this, that what rule or laws or customs or people were flat against the word of God

are diametrically opposed to Christianity.

[38 : 38] If I have said amiss in this, convince me of my error, and I am ready before you to make my recantation. As to the second, to wit, Mr. Superstition, and his charge against me, I said only this, that in the worship of God there is required a divine faith, but there can be no divine faith without a divine revelation of the will of God.

Therefore, whatever is thrust into the worship of God that is not agreeable to divine revelation cannot be done but by a human faith, which faith will not be profitable to eternal life.

As to what Mr. Pick think, hath said, I say, avoiding terms as that I am said to rail and the like, that the prince of this town with all the rabblement, his attendance by this gentleman named, are more fit for a being in hell than in this town and country, and so the Lord have mercy on me.

You see the things that he responds to them, that those things of the world are diametrically opposed to the things of Christ, that those things that have made themselves into the worship of God that are not given to us by the regulative principle of scripture are of man's faith and not of faith in God, and that those who rejoice in these things are more suitable for hell and for the kingdom.

These are the charges he brings against these men. And then we see the judge's charge. Then the judge called to the jury who all this while stood by to hear and observe.

[40 : 18] Gentlemen of the jury, you see this man about whom so great an uproar have been made in this town. You have also heard what these worthy gentlemen have witnessed against him. Also you have heard his reply and confession.

It lieth now in your breast to hang him or save his life, but yet I think meet to instruct you in our law. There was an act made in the days of Pharaoh the great, servant to our prince, that lest those of a contrary religion should multiply and grow too strong for him, their males should be thrown into the river.

There was also an act made in the days of Nebuchadnezzar the great, another of his servants, that whomever would not fall down and worship his golden image should be thrown into a fiery furnace.

There was also an act made in the days of Darius, that whoso for some time called upon any god but him should be cast into the lion's den. Now the substance of these laws this rebel has broken, not only in thought but also in word and deed, which must therefore needs be intolerable.

For that of Pharaoh, his law was made upon a supposition to prevent mischief, no crime being yet apparent, but here is a crime apparent. For the second and third, you see, he disputeth against our religion, and for the treason that he hath confessed, he deserveth to die the death.

[41 : 47] So there's some discourse amongst the jury, which is fantastic, and then we read of Faithful's martyrdom. They therefore brought him out to do with him according to their law.

First they scourged him, then they buffeted him, then they lanced his flesh with knives. After that they stoned him with stones, then pricked him with their swords. Last of all, they burned him to ashes at the stake.

Thus came Faithful to his end. Now I saw that there stood behind him, behind the multitude, a chariot and a couple of horses, waiting for Faithful, who, so soon as his adversaries had dispatched him, was taken up into it, and straight away was carried up through the clouds with the sound of trumpet, the nearest way to the celestial gate.

But as for Christian, he had some respite and was remanded back to prison, so he there remained for space. But he who overrules all things, having the power of their rage in his own hand, so rotted about that Christian for that time escaped them and went his way.

And as he went, he sang, sang, Well, faithful, thou hast faithfully professed unto the Lord with whom thou shalt be blessed.

[43 : 05] When faithless ones with all their vain delights are crying out under their hellish plights, sing, faithful sing, and let thy name survive, for though they kill thee, thou art yet alive.

Let's pray together. Let's pray Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray Let's pray