

XIII. Eternity in Biblical Perspective
If I Should Die Before I Wake...
“If I Should Die Before I Wake—A Summation”
(plus XLII. *Conversations with Harry and Bruce*)
Revelation 6:12–17
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
May 2, 2021 • Evening Sermon

Let's start by looking at II Corinthians 4. This series partly came out of the Apostles' Creed series when we got to the part of Jesus ascending into hades/hell which has two parts to it – the place of torment and the place of blessing. Jesus has a true human death, body and soul. Seems as though people want to dismiss that but it is actually the fulfillment of Psalm 16. Jesus would not abandon His soul to Sheol which is the Old Testament word for hades nor His body to the grave, therefore the resurrection of Christ was the resurrection of His soul from paradise, after the third day and His body united in perfection so that we can see what awaits us in the resurrection of the dead when He returns.

One of the reasons it's important for us to affirm that is because that is the pattern that will happen to us. This prayer, 'if I should die before I wake I pray the Lord my soul to take' is right for it's not your body yet but your soul then. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:8). Your soul which will be perfected is what will be present with the Lord if you die before He returns. Sometimes I think we just need clarity on this. The body will go to the grave if you die before He returns and you won't be running and jumping around with Him until your body is united with your soul at the Second Coming of Christ.

The theologians call this the intermediate heaven/destination but I don't like to call it that because of what it does. It seems to get minimized when it is called the intermediate as people don't think of it as much of a blessing or confuse it with the fabricated notions of purgatory, so I prefer to call it what the Bible calls it – the immediate heaven. When you die your soul goes to be with the Lord in that immediate heaven. When Jesus comes back the perfected body will be joined to the perfected soul and then they go to the ultimate destination which is the new heavens and the new earth. The God now ruling from the heavens will rule on the new earth. There will be no sin, no consequences of sin, no curse of sin or even the ability to sin.

After we looked at this in the series we took the time to answer from the Bible when Christ will return. So we looked at the signs for the close of the age and His Second Coming. We looked at the Judgment Seat, the thousand year reign and those things associated with the Second Coming of Christ. The believer will go to the new heavens and the new earth and the unbeliever will be cast into the lake of fire, Gehenna, the place of the infinite, unending judgment of God in outer darkness, meaning absolute isolation and also in torment under the irrevocable wrath of God that is justly given.

So if we are still here when Jesus returns we will automatically be caught up with those who previously died, as their perfected bodies will be joined to their perfected souls, as will ours and deposited in the new heavens and the new earth. If that doesn't happen then we will face death and so what does that look like? To kind of sum up this immediate heaven I thought I would do my closing comments from II Corinthians 4. This is a text most people don't go to but I think is most definitive to understand what is next for us if we die if Jesus doesn't come back first.

II Corinthians 4:7–12 says [7] *But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.* (This is God’s work in us, not our work to get to God.) [8] *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;* [9] *persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;* [10] *always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.* [11] *For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.* [12] *So death is at work in us, but life in you.*

This passage shows we currently live in a fallen world so our bodies will be afflicted. We are to take up our cross and follow Jesus daily and always counted as sheep to be slaughtered. We die daily to live unto Christ. When it says ‘manifested in our bodies’ (vs 9) I refer you to Romans 12:1 which says [1] *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, **by the mercies of God**, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* We not only have gathered worship, but lifestyle worship. Our ability for growth in lifestyle worship throughout a week is directly related to our embracing gathered worship and the means of grace on the Lord’s Day. That gathered worship sets the thermostat for lifestyle worship where in our bodies we present ourselves, not like the old covenant where dead sacrifices were brought, but in the new covenant because of the atoning death of Christ’s sacrifice we bring living sacrifices before the Lord. Yet this body is dying and it will be laid aside which is part of God’s appointment.

Let’s look further in II Corinthians 4:13–18 which says [13] *Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak,* [14] *knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence.* [15] *For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.*

[16] *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.* [17] *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,* [18] *as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.* (Here we see that the body is wasting away but we are growing spiritually. God is using the affliction in the body to perfect our souls to bring us into His presence.)

II Corinthians 5:1–5 says [1] *For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2] *For in this tent (body) we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,* [3] *if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked.* [4] *For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.* [5] *He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*

This passage also reminds us of John 14:1–3 when Jesus says [1] *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. [2] In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”* This home we are living in now is transient and being torn down but it will be raised for the home He gives us for all eternity. This also reminds us of the groaning in our bodies we see from Romans 8:22–23 which says [22] *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.* [23] *And not only the creation, but we ourselves,*

who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. This body we are in bears the curse of sin and the Holy Spirit bears witness of you that these promises of a new body for the new heavens and the new earth, are secured in Christ as you are sealed by the Holy Spirit. Let's continue in II Corinthians.

II Corinthians 5:6–10 says [6] *So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, [7] for we walk by faith, not by sight. [8] Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord (with Him in that new body in the new heavens and the new earth). [9] So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him. [10] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

This passage is a reminder of Philippians 1:20 when Paul says [20] *as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.* So those who are in the books in that Day their sins will be accounted and they will be accountable for them. On that Day the believer's sins will not be accounted to us because they have already been paid for by Christ for we are not in the books but in the Book of Life and from that time on we will have a new body for the new heavens and the new earth.

Before Jesus comes there is something that comes throughout all of history. There is the beast of the sea which are tyrannical governments that would take the place of God and it loves to produce chaos in order to be your savior. It's interesting to note that your Savior doesn't produce chaos but order and peace in your life. Always accompanying this beast of the sea is an apostate man-made religion that supports it and this is the beast of the land. In this study we're going to look at the constant battle that the professing church not become adulterated and apostate and become the beast of the land. For the sake of cultural acceptance, applause and power it becomes unfaithful to Christ and conformed to the culture. So how can the church remain faithful when that constant pressure is there? So, let's get started in the question and answer time.

Conversations with Harry & Bruce

Bruce: The issues facing our denomination are sexuality, homosexuality, critical race theory, critical theory, intersectionality, social justice, cultural transformation, etc. and this sounds like a list of just cultural issues. If we understand what each of these actually mean would say hasn't this been asked and answered in our denomination?

Harry: It has been asked and answered but they don't stop asking. I have a 10 minute radio program I use to answer things like this and my problem is having to cut more of the material out than I want to in order to stay within the time limit.

Our culture is moving toward a neo-pagan culture called secular humanism which is actually a euphemism for neo-paganism and a description given to us in Romans 1:18–32. It also comes under the term of being a progressive movement. In other words, this is an evolving movement. We are evolving away from the inadequacies and inequities of the American experiment and this is what is being pushed with political policies. What is true politically is being mirrored in the church in what is called as progressive Christianity.

With that all of these issues are coming up like Revoice theology and side A. Side A is the practice and desires of homosexuality are built into nature, the creation where there is a gene for it. If you believe in evolution how can you believe in a homosexual gene because it couldn't reproduce, but that's side A and the church has to get over homosexuality and sex outside of marriage in sin for this is just the way we're made and we need to have the freedom to do those things.

Side B says that homosexuality is not apart of God's creation, it's not to be accommodated and it's sin, but the desire is not necessarily a sin. Here is the language that is being used here, that homosexuality comes from the sin nature. It is of sin but it is not a sin unless you act upon it. This is basically adopting the Roman Catholic view which is the desires for sin are not sin unless you act them out. Here you might hear someone say 'I am a gay Christian but I know to act on these desires would be sin so I'm going to be a celibate gay Christian.' Now is this a position that the Scriptures teach? I don't think so for I don't think the Bible gives us designer sin natures where one might have a homosexual sin nature but this one gets a pornographic sin nature, etc. No, we get a sin nature and we in response to life and environment begin to work it out in how we're responding to the influences outside and the sin nature inside of us.

Addictive sins are deeply rooted. Sometimes God will microwave them out but most of the time it's a lifelong challenge to deal with it. So I applaud the commitment to celibacy but you don't just manage your sinful desires, you mortify them, you kill them but we have this side B that has been promoted through this Revoice conference that was held in a PCA church that has PCA elders speaking on this so now there are complaints at the General Assembly that these churches should be disciplined. Their presbyteries did not discipline them therefore other presbyteries are asking the General Assembly to step in and overrule those presbyteries because this needs to be dealt with.

You can also pick up and read constantly that we have to fight racism. Granted, it's a sin and yes it is, but to fight racism you need to go read Black Liberation theology, Critical theory, it's subsets of Critical Race theory, Critical Law theory, and Intersectionality which is the score card, whereby it looks at people and rates them on how oppressed they are. It's almost like this is being canonized where young ministers are coming out thinking this is what they have to read and have in order to know how to deal with racism and my answer is, no it's not.

The push back that comes when I say you don't have to read them and the reason I say that is that these things were not developed by those under racism. These are political social tools that were developed for the purpose of spreading international communism and they acknowledge they are anti-Christian, anti-Gospel, with no hope, no salvation and they define repentance as penance continually. The whole point is that the oppressed become oppressors which will lead to those oppressed that will create a push back on them. It is designed to create disorder, violence and chaos. Guess who will step in to save it? It will be the government. I don't want to defund the police, we need a federal police force, not a local police force. We will save it and step in.

Now the church is embracing something that is accommodating all these things. I'd say chew the meat that you get and spit out the bones. I'll admit there are things that some unbelievers write that by God's common grace there is some meat but this isn't one of them. That is the wrong picture. These things don't have meat. All the meat I need are in the Bible on this stuff. This is not the DNA of your skin, this is the DNA of your heart that leads to partiality and discrimination. Jesus deals with the heart, He doesn't just prune the edges. He brings not social

justice but Biblical justice on how we are to love one another. Where we love the Lord with all our heart, soul and mind and your neighbor as yourself and the only way you can get there is through the Gospel. So, the Gospel goes to the heart.

When you read this stuff you're like a thirsty man, who is in the ocean and drinks the sea water – you can't spit out the salt. It will kill you. This doesn't have meat and bones. Its origins deem it non-redemptive. I have really tried to think my way through this and all of this needs to be answered and dealt with but it all comes under the umbrella of progressive Christianity and that's the real issue here. So if you want to do a deep dive into Critical theory and all the other stuff around it, then I'd recommend my friend's book Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe by Voddie Bauchman and Carl Trueman's book The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution.

Now if you want to read about progressive Christianity I recommend the book Christianity and Liberalism by J. Gresham Machen. It was written to answer the movement of Christian liberalism from the 18th to the 19th century. Why would I recommend a book that is designed to show theological liberalism is anti-Christian? It is not a subset of Christianity for it is anti-Christian – it is the enemy of Christianity. They use the glossary of our theological vocabulary but not our dictionary, where they don't mean the same thing. The reason I recommend this now is because progressive Christianity is cut from the same volt of cloth as liberal Christianity. The dress is designed different but it is from the same cloth. Christian liberalism's impetus was not to destroy Christianity, but to save Christianity from cultural irrelevance.

The modern man in the modern academic world – modernity demanded we had to adapt. If we didn't adapt as a church to the 19th century development of critical research and academic principles, then we will be put on the dustbin of history – does that sound familiar? If we don't adapt we'll lose our children or if we don't adapt we'll be on the wrong side of history. That was the movement of Christian liberalism. We want to save the church from irrelevance so that it can transform the culture. We need to get rid of the unnecessary divisions and therefore the protestant church launched at the same time a new confessional recommendation whereby all the protestants could come together as a big force and not be divided – inclusiveness – and if you have to give up a few Bible doctrines that's okay.

Doesn't the Bible say how can two walk together unless they are agreed (Amos 3:3)? Paul says in I Corinthians 11:18–19, *[18] For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, [19] for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.* It's not unity at all cost but it's unity by the Spirit through love but never at the cost of truth.

So what do we see in progressive Christianity? The church is going to be irrelevant for we're losing our children, but in liberal Christianity it was the getting rid of archaic Christian doctrines that are supernatural – virgin birth, miracles, resurrection. People say to me today that no one in progressive Christianity is saying to do away with the virgin birth, right but they are saying here is the new mission of the church – cultural transformation. So the mission is don't be irrelevant, be the culture shaper. The protestants said the 20th century would be the Christian century and even started a magazine called the Christian Century. To have the Christian century we can't be dismissed because of our neanderthal supernatural doctrines for we have to vacuum out of our confessions anything that has the supernatural for that won't fly in the new modernity.

That is why I recommend Machen's book. This is not a help to Christianity or a subset of Christianity. He carefully titled the book – Christianity and Liberalism – the most important word in that title is the word 'and.' Christianity is one thing and Liberalism is something else. In progressive Christianity the onslaught is not against the confession but it's against the mission. You need to understand that the mission will always, ultimately determine the message. If you want to be a cultural transformer you are going to be conformed to the culture. I am for cultural transformation for I love Acts 17:6b which says [6b] shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also." But Paul did not go out to turn the world upside down, he went out to turn sinners right side up. And their life, marriages, families, relationships, cultures and cities all change. Cultural transformation is not the mission, it's the consequence.

It's like church growth for if you decide church growth is your mission, you will get a pragmatic gospel to put meat in the seats. If you decide social justice is the mission (I'm for Biblical justice), then you will get a social gospel. If we decide self-esteem is our mission then you will get a therapeutic gospel. If we decide capitalistic success is the mission then you will get a prosperity gospel. The mission will ultimately define the message. Progressive Christianity is not coming directly against the message, for it's coming with the mission and that's what will change the message. This will happen in less than 15 to 20 years.

I know this was more than what you were probably looking for but I have been having to deal with this a lot lately and this upcoming General Assembly is going to be highly definitive and the next General Assembly is going to be highly determinative of does progressive Christianity not having just a presence but does it get a root. This needs to be dealt with. It's not going around to the various issues, although you need to know about them, but to see where it's coming from and that is we will save Christianity by giving us a relevant mission – human flourishing, seek the welfare of the city. It does say in Jeremiah 29 to seek the welfare of the city but if you read the previous verses he defines the welfare of the city. The city doesn't define the welfare of the city we seek, for Jesus defines the welfare of the city.

Read Acts 8 and it will help you see what the welfare to the city is. Philip went to the city of Samaria preaching Jesus and discipling. Acts 8:5–8 says [5] **Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.** [6] *And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.* [7] *For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.* [8] **So there was much joy in that city.**

Our mission is to make disciples. We have a comprehensive message which is the whole counsel of God with the Gospel as the foundation, formation and the motivation but we will not turn out Christians who are salt of the earth and light of the world. Christians have a broad mission and that is which is found in I Corinthians 10:31, [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* But you can't get there is Briarwood doesn't stay on mission, on message and in ministry, in making disciples through evangelism and discipleship. This is what turns out Christians who love mercy, walk humbly with God and do justice, because we get not only a new record and a new heart but a renewed mind. If we do this we will see those consequences of our church growing, people coming to Christ, people seeing themselves made in the image of Christ, people being effective in their business, being encouragers of others, people doing Biblical justice, etc.

I'd like to give an example. In our last sanctity of life service there were ten ministries that stood up front and eight of them had been started by Briarwood members. Why? It is

because we disciple them and then received a burden for this kind of service and became salt of the earth and light of the world. That is where their heart went but they could not have done it without being evangelized and disciplined. Every year I knew I was going to get a visit from John Glasser. This 81 year old retired man would come and tell me that every member of Briarwood needs to be tutoring in the inner city and doing better basics. I loved that he thought that but I would talk him out of the tree and tell him there are some he didn't want doing that, but he had that heart because he had been evangelized and disciplined. At 81 years of age he unleashed something that reverberates throughout the city that ended up with discovery clubs for these kids. Let's have the next question.

Bruce: You feel progressive Christianity at some level is seeping into but not yet taken root in our denomination but it's coming in. So are those wolves in sheep's clothing or sheep in wolves clothing or are they brothers who have adopted another mission with good intention or are they liberals who know liberalism won't work so how about progressivism?

Harry: I'm not amazed that we're facing this. I believe our founding fathers had it right – here is the mission and vision of the church. They said three things – true to the inherent Word, faithful to the reformed faith, and fulfill the Great Commission. Unfortunately, succeeding generations don't always get on board and we need to improve this. There is a sense that we understand that with contextualization but contextualization is speaking in the terms that culture understands, not speaking in the terms that the culture demands. In progressive churches, thank the Lord, you will hear sermons on racism but you won't hear any sermons on the sanctity of life or on gender, marriage or sexuality. The culture will applaud the one on racism.

Bruce: For clarity, are you talking about PCA churches?

Harry: Yes, wherever there is a progressive pulpit and that's one of the reasons I do expository preaching. I'm a human being and certainly I'd rather do the things that get the applause. People tend to memorize verses from Romans 8, 12, 10, 5, 1, 6 but on the issues of our sin and the depth of our sin from Romans 2 and 3 we don't tend to memorize. I would certainly rather preach on Romans 8 but you have to deal with the whole counsel of God when you do expository preaching and God's people need it. Even though we're like kids who don't want the meal, you're glad when you get older that your mother made you eat the meal. This isn't me making you eat the meal, this is God making me put the meal on the table for you because God knows you need it. Progressive Christianity takes its cues from the culture, not from the Scriptures.

Do I believe these are wolves in sheep's clothing? The vast majority, no for the vast majority are sheep in wolves clothing. I don't believe they are heretics but I believe they are embracing heretical teaching. I think they are probably right hearted but wrong headed. Some of them are my best friends and this is not easy for me and we have to deal with these things. I put the vast majority in the category when Paul had to come and tell Peter that he had let the people influence him and now he was preaching another gospel (Galatians 2:11–14). Peter wasn't a wolf in sheep's clothing, he was a sheep, a shepherd that had wolves clothing under influence and I believe he corrected himself as I read I and II Peter. I think this is somewhat inevitable.

If you read the book of Judges every 40 to 80 years there is a downgrade and the only thing that can answer the downgrade is leadership. I love my elders and deacons who are in the

battle with us because I just went through this at Westminster Seminary. When this seminary was 70 years old we had allowed teachers and professors that ought not to be there. So we were in a ten year battle and Westminster Seminary is stronger today than it ever has been with the exception of its very first faculty and this faculty now revivals that faculty, but it was leadership and the board that fought the battle. We had to make eight to ten changes in the faculty but had to fight the battle.

I believe that is where we are in the PCA now for the PCA is 47 years old so we're right in that 40 to 80 year mark. We need God-centered leadership. I was not one of the founding fathers for I was in college when the PCA started but I was in a founding church at that time. I admired those men and the sacrifices they made so I'm not walking away from the fight. Some have and some will. I'm in the fight and I'm going to stay in the fight until God signals that the fight has been lost and the confession has been abandoned. That's not just simply editing the confession for if the church will not bring discipline according to the confession, then it has abandoned the confession. One of the marks of the church is church discipline. If we don't have the will to discipline the offices of elder and deacon and the membership of the church then we cannot be a Biblical church.

I love people trapped in sin too much to give them a fake news – I want to give them the Good News. If a doctor tells me I have cancer but says I only need cosmetic surgery to deal with it then I don't want it because I want the doctor to go after it. We are physicians of the soul and we know sin brings death, penalties and consequences and we have the answer that is not cosmetic but goes to the heart, then we have to speak the truth in love. To accept and love people you do not have to accept and affirm sin.

Bruce: If they are sheep in wolves clothing, then that determines how we go about it then that reflects why the Gospel Reformation Network is doing this conference so it's not a rebuke or going to battle, but it's a 'let's reach our brothers' so speak about this conference coming up.

Harry: The Gospel Reformation Network began a number of years ago. I was moderator of the General Assembly and I did an outgoing moderator sermon that was held in Norfolk. My heart was burdened because I saw an inadequate gospel being preached in the name of a Gospel movement. It comes under the title of Sonship, again I have good friends who support this but I think it's an incomplete gospel. It's a gospel that majors on the declarative blessings of justification and adoption but doesn't call for the demands of the Gospel by regeneration and sanctification. If we're going to preach the Gospel we can't fall into the ditch of legalism or antinomianism that God's law does not have a place in the Gospel. The law can't save you, sanctify you but the law directs you to Christ and then when you come to Christ the law directs you how to love Him with all of your heart, soul and mind which is the lawful use of the law. So half of the New Testament is warning us about legalism – something you have to do to be saved instead of what you do for your Savior and then half of it is warning you against antinomianism, libertinism – using the Gospel of grace as a cloak to cover up your sins instead of killing your sins.

After this sermon I gave at the General Assembly I was overwhelmed particularly by ruling elders who wanted to share this with their pastors. So from there we decided we were going to do a Gospel Reformation Network to winsomely publish, preach and pray that we get back to the reformed Gospel and not these adulterated gospels that have part of the Gospel – the part of the blessings of your status without the call to holiness for Christ, not for salvation, whom

you love and He says ‘if you love Me you will keep My commandments’ (John 14:15). As things moved along we actually begin to see some success and then came progressive Christianity.

When I hear someone say at the General Assembly ‘you can’t pray the gay away’ I was just overwhelmed. We are talking about the sacred means of grace and prayer. Are you telling me that all I’m going to do is pray? Surely not, for we’re going to disciple, fellowship, preach, teach for there are all kinds of things we’re going to do but to demean prayer and say that this sin is so embedded you can’t pray the gay away? The Bible tells me that if I have faith as small as a mustard seed then God moves mountains with it if He so decides to and when He decides to. So I realize that this is a Gospel issue. This isn’t just a cosmetic issue. We have people who say they believe but don’t really believe I Corinthians 6:9–11 which says *[9] Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, [10] nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

[11] And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

In this passage He lists nine deeply addictive sins and then says you were washed (regenerated), sanctified and justified in Christ which is the whole Gospel where you were declared right by the blood and righteousness of Jesus and then He went right to work on you and in you to set you free from the dominion of sin. Do you still have that old man that wants to take control? Yes, but you don’t manage that old man, you kill him every single morning with the means of grace. You do it with all your heart and soul so we realize this is a Gospel issue, not a cosmetic, secondary, tertiary issue that we can kind of all create the big tent. I want to give hope to people that they can be set free from the guilt, shame, power and increasingly the practice of sin. Some will be healed instantly but most with deeply embedded sins, it will be a process to work through these. Seven of those nine sins listed were mine when I was converted and married my wife. Of those seven a number of them were gone instantly but some of them I have had to kill every day for the rest of my life, but I can’t because I have sin living in me but I don’t have to sin. This is a Gospel issue so the Gospel Reformation Network said ‘we have to take this on.’

Winsomely we’re going to do positive sermons – O church arise! What is our mission, our message and ministry? We’re going to talk to pastors. One of the talks given by Kevin DeYoung will be the Pastor as a Plotter. Forget the dress issue, be faithful as a pastor and stay the course. There are all kinds of great talks that are going to be given.

Bruce: The Gospel Reformation Network Conference happens May 5–6, 2021 (briarwood.org/conferences) We’ll keep praying the Lord will help us move forward as restrictions are eased from COVID-19 in our gathering together on the Lord’s Day. God bless you.