

I. Progressive Christianity in Biblical Perspective
Historic Biblical Christianity and Contemporary Progressive Christianity
“Its Motivation, Its Mission, Its Message”

Galatians 1:6–10

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May 16, 2021 • Evening Sermon

I'd like to start by looking at Acts. I want this study to get through to us, because I think that there is a significant battle that is here in Christ's church, the professing church. It's a battle that needs to be met Biblically, in the power of the Spirit, to the honor of Christ, with confidence in Christ having been conformed to the mind of Christ and renewed in our minds for Christ and filled with His Spirit. Now having said that, I thought there's a number of key texts I want to work through as we go through this series.

What's the series? First of all, I have been asked by the session to give some thoughts on this matter of progressive Christianity in our session meetings. They wanted me to address not only in light of what is happening as we observe it, but because of how this has come home to look for roost and rest even within our own beloved denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America, knowing that there are some crucial issues that are coming up before our General Assembly in June and then likely some even more crucial or as crucial issues that will be coming up throughout the year and to the next General Assembly, which by the way, we will be hosting here in Birmingham in 2022.

This year we have a number of overtures and issues that come to us under the rubric of progressive Christianity. What are some of these issues? The fact is that there are a number of pastors in our churches not looking primarily to the Word of God. They would say that they are, but functionally, they're not, in that they have almost canonized certain books that have come out of cultural/social/political tools. Those cultural/social/political tools usually come out of what was developed at a radical school, to promote international communism. I don't want to get into the details on this, but communism in the 1900s did not have the success it thought it should have had. It had some local successes in large nations turning, but it didn't move internationally as they thought it should, so they began to develop tools to advance it out of a school in Frankfurt, which became the Frankfurt Critical Theory tools. Some of them are called critical theory, and they have subsets. Critical race theory, critical law theory, and just plain critical theory. We will cover that in a few weeks, so that I can try to help you understand that a little bit more.

One of my concerns right now is there are books that are being written by professing evangelicals that basically are not drawn from the Scripture. They use the Scripture and the vocabulary of our Christian theology, but they don't use the same meanings. In their writings, they use the evangelical and reformed theological glossary and vocabulary, but not our dictionary. So it becomes extremely crucial for us to know what's happening, and what's being said, because if God's people are not equipped, they hear the words they've heard all their life, but they don't realize, those words don't mean the same from that pulpit that they mean from the pulpit that you grew up in. How can you recognize that?

Secondly, there is the sexual revolution, the LGBTQA+ agenda, and so it's not something the church has gone looking for but it has gone looking for the church. The church with its Biblical view of sexual ethics has a certain resting place confessionally, what is man? What is male and female? There is the sanctity of gender, the sanctity of marriage, one man, one woman,

one life, the sanctity of sexuality in the context of marriage, and the sanctity of family. Then there is the movement of the sexual revolution, and I use the word revolution not advisedly, but pointedly. Those revolutions have one objective, and that objective is, everyone will be required to celebrate what they once condemned and condemn what they once celebrated. We're not talking about room at the table for lifestyles that used to be set aside. So various things have come into the church where we need to know how to minister to people who have the addictions of sexual sins such as homosexuality. It's clear. God can save people from their sins, but how does that happen?

There was a movement that was begun, called Revoice, and in that movement, there are two approaches. We will come back to this in more detail but I want to just give you just a feel for it. One approach was called Side A. The other approach was called Side B. I guess that's drawn from my high school days, when a 45 record came out, there was side A, which was preferred, and side B, which sometimes outsold side A. I don't know whether that's where it came from or not, but that's the language that is used. Side A says the homosexual desires, practices, and engagement is that which comes from who I am and I was born that way. It is genetically determined, and therefore the church needs to realize that. You believe God made everything. If God made us this way, then you've got to get over your hang-ups on your phobias, your homophobias, and you've got to learn to accept it because we didn't choose this. This was inflicted upon us by way of genetic approbation.

I will take the time just simply to say this: With a Christian world and life view, I set that aside for two reasons. Number one, general revelation. There is no genetic connection. There is no DNA connection, and all the tests that have attempted to prove it have proved fruitless. Number two, is when you read Romans 1 God describes the homosexual desires in relationship as "unnatural." Then that means it can't be Side A, because Side A says, "I was born that way, it's natural." So, there's Side B, which says, "No, we didn't choose it either. We have that orientation not because of creation, that we were made that way, but we have that because of the sin nature we inherited when we were born. Our sin nature is designed that way, and so we have a sin nature of sexual orientation, same-sex orientation." That's why they would then come out and say, "Therefore, part of my identity is I am a "gay Christian" or I am a same-sex attracted or same-sex oriented Christian."

In our position paper, we make abundantly clear when people come searching or we go seeking them and they have this addictive sin in their life, we don't make them get the vocabulary right upfront. No, if they come in and say, "Well, I think I'm a gay, but I want to be a gay Christian." We'll say then, "let's start right there. What does it mean to be a Christian?" and we'll get to the nomenclature. But, when the denominational leadership adopts that nomenclature, adopts those terms, there is no way that they could be faithful to the Gospel, because those terms are not consistent with the Gospel.

Why would I say that? First of all, the Gospel tells me I have a sin nature, but the Gospel is very clear. I don't get a designer sin nature. It's not like God said, "Okay, I'm going to give this guy a pornographic sin nature and then I'm going to give this person a thieving sin nature. I'm going to give this one a homicidal sin nature. I'm going to give this one a homosexual sin nature." No, the Bible is clear. We have a sin nature that is in rebellion against God, but when you get saved, you get a new record, a new heart, a new nature and according to II Corinthians 5:17 it says *[17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* Now, you still have an old man living in you so what do you do? You work out your salvation as a statement of worship, with fear and trembling, for it is God who is

at work in you. So what do you do with your sin nature when you're born again? You get a new nature in Christ, with a new record and a new heart so that you can work out your new life.

When you're born into this world, you have a sin nature that didn't come with a designer label on it. You then work it out in response to your heart and to this world, and how you're dealing with this world instead of dealing with everything by surrendering to Christ. Therefore, we design the life of rebellion out of our sin nature, not we are victimized by it. As for being named by sin? I had some serious addictive sins. I tried to forget them, and when they want to crop back up out of the weed patch, I don't try to manage them and cut them back. I want to pull them out by the roots. I want to kill it. I never want that to be my identity.

Paul says in Ephesians 5:3–5, *[3] But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. [4] Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. [5] For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*

I want Briarwood to be a safe church for sinners, but the unsafest place in the world for sin. We want to see sinners loved and redeemed, and sin killed, because if you don't kill sin, it will kill you – your testimony, your life, your marriage. That's why Paul says, "Don't let it be named among you." Now, if God tells us that we are not to have sin named, that is allowed to exist without attacking it to kill it in our midst, why would we take something that's not to be named and name ourselves with it? "I'm a gay Christian, I'm a fornicating Christian. I'm a pornographic Christian." People say when they deal with addictive sins they are to say something like "Hi, I'm Joe Smith, and I'm an alcoholic." I understand what people are doing when they say this, but that's the therapeutic world. That's not the redemptive world. The redemptive world says, "Hi, I was a sinner under the dominion of sin. I am now a sinner saved by grace under the dominion of grace, and now my life is Christ. Whatever sin I have left, I'm on the war path with it." How do we get rid of it? We don't manage it. We mortify it, kill it, destroy it.

What do you do with deeply entangling, besetting sins that you want to get rid of, but they're hanging on in your life? When you get converted some of your addictive sins, God just takes them right out, but some of them, you fight the rest of your life. They keep cropping back up. I believe the key to it is discipleship, and the completely immersing of yourself in the means of grace. Even as a saved person, I have some broken areas in my life. I haven't been perfected yet. I'm a vessel for the Lord, and I pray for His grace. If a vessel is broken, how can you fill it up to overflowing? It's broken. It leaks. There's only one way you can fill up a broken vessel, a vessel with holes in it, is to submerge it. You have to immerse it, then it fills up, and it overflows. You don't take little forays and ambush attacks on it. You bring an all-out assault and submerge yourself in the Word, prayer, fellowship, preaching, worship to kill deeply embedded sin. I want to give you two pictures.

I don't have many trees in my backyard, praise the Lord. I don't even have a big backyard. Doubly, I praise the Lord. I do have two trees, and one tree, when the fall comes and the sap goes down, I'm referring to what's in the tree, not me. When the sap goes down, those leaves begin to fall off and start making room when the spring and the sap comes up. I have another tree, it's right beside the house, and when the fall comes, the leaves don't fall. They just stay there. They stay there the whole winter until the spring. When the spring comes, they didn't fall off to make room for the new in the fall because the sap brings up and pushes them out to make room. That's discipleship. Some of the sins in our life, we have to fill up and push them out. Some of them, we need to cut off the supply. Cut the sap off so that they fall away or are

taken away. So in order to put off the old man including besetting sins get into the Gospel blessings of the means of grace. God's Gospel is powerful. God's Word is powerful. God's Spirit is powerful. Prayer is powerful. Immerse yourself in all of that and one thing you also do is flee temptation so that you cut off the supply to the sin, then start filling up with that which will push out sin in your life.

Side B comes up with this notion, that the orientation and desire is not sin unless I act it out, but that stands in conflict with Galatians, Ephesians and James, which tell us sin comes when the inward desires match the outward temptation and they unite and sin is what they give birth to. In the Christian life, we flee the temptation and we mortify the flesh every single day. We're not talking about issues of technique in the church. We're talking about issues of theology. These are issues of the first order. Side B Christianity says you can come to Christ and get the blessings of justification and adoption, but you don't get the power of regeneration and sanctification. Yet we say, "No, the Gospel not only has the blessings of changing your status, it also has the blessings of changing your heart and your life, not perfectly, not evenly, but it will do its work." Yes, on this side of eternity, you can get some victories.

That's why the Bible says in I Corinthians 6:9, 10, *[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.* You have been justified and there's a declarative blessing. You've been washed with regeneration. There is the transformation blessing. Such were some of you, but sin no longer has dominion over you.

So, we're dealing with social and political instruments that have been canonized into the libraries of leaders in our church and evangelical churches, and that's the go-to, to deal with many of the social, political and cultural issues of the day. They are not the Gospel, and no hope of the Gospel, but these instruments that aren't designed for Gospel solutions. They're actually anti-Christian. They're actually anti-gospel. They don't call for repentance, they call for penance. They don't call for repentance unto forgiveness, they call for penance, and so that the so-called oppressors, now get oppressed. In other words, they don't call for the end of issues like racism. They call for the exchange of creating new racists, who were there to oppress the old racists, until those get their oppression dealt with, by creating new oppressors. It has no hope, no forgiveness, no heart. These are things that are used in progressive Christianity that have no solution in mind. The only thing they have in mind is the promotion of those who preach them and teach them, not the emancipation of those who are being used to further them.

So how do we deal with these issues, and how should we deal with it? We can't run around and play Whack-A-Mole apologetics. We go over here and we're going to slap down critical race theory, or critical theory, or critical law theory. Then we're going to slap down racism or social justice, and the social gospel. All of these things need to be answered, and I'm going to try to give you some handles on all these issues in this series, but you need to understand that all of those are flowing out of an invasion of a false theology that is not a subset of Christianity. It is ultimately anti-Christianity, and it's called progressive Christianity.

This series is historic Biblical Christianity in contrast, and contemporary progressive Christianity. The most important word in that title is the word 'and' because I do not believe the two are related. They're in opposition. In other words, I do not believe that contemporary progressive Christianity is ultimately a subset or an iteration of Christianity, or it's an avenue of Christianity for certain people who have certain personality types. I believe it is anti-Christian

and it eventually will manifest itself as an adversary with the techniques, the therapies, and with the message that it offers. I believe this for a couple of reasons. So, let's start by looking in Acts 1. Let's look at the roots of Biblical Christianity.

In the Book of Acts, the Gospel is flowing out of obedience to the Great Commission found in Matthew 28. Here, Jesus takes His disciples before He ascended and He said in Matthew 28:18–20, [18] *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* This is Jesus' Great Commission, that's coupled with the Great Commandment – You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, soul, and mind, and your neighbor as yourself. Then He went up on the Mount of Olives to ascend. What were His last words to them before He ascended?

Acts 1:4–5 says [4] *And while staying with them He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father (Holy Spirit), which, He said, "you heard from Me; [5] for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."*

Here are some foundational truths. The Holy Spirit did not start working after the ascension of Jesus. What does it mean that He is sending the promise of the Father? That doesn't mean that the Holy Spirit was not working in the Old Testament. Did people get saved by grace in the Old Testament? Yes, they had to have the work of the Spirit to get saved. Here's what's different. Now, the Holy Spirit who is sent is called the Spirit of Christ. In other words, the same Spirit that was with Jesus from the womb and the virgin birth to the tomb, out of the tomb, and then received Him into glory from Heaven, He now sends His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who had been with Him in His accomplishment of His work of redemption, upon His people. So, you get the Holy Spirit, not necessarily from the womb to the tomb.

When Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives and was taken up, who took Him up? The Holy Spirit who brought Him down to that womb now takes Him up, and then at the enthronement, at the right time, Jesus is going to pour forth the Spirit. He is going to baptize His people with the same Spirit who was with Him. The Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ will come upon you from the new birth all the way until you are brought to glory for that same Spirit is going to be with you, and you are baptized. The Bible does not teach a baptism of the Spirit. Sorry, I know it's taught, but it's not true. The Bible teaches a baptism of Jesus with the Spirit. The Spirit is not the baptizer. Jesus is the baptizer, and He baptizes His people in, with, and by the Holy Spirit.

Why does He baptize us with the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:5 says, [5] *for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.* When will that be? It will be 10 days later at Pentecost. Let's continue in the text. Acts 1:6–11 says [6] *So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" [7] He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. [8] But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." [9] And when He had said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. [10] And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, [11] and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."*

Here we see He is baptized with the Holy Spirit. He has come upon you, and what does the Holy Spirit do? He gives you power. Why does He give you power? He gives you power so that you will be His witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the Earth. Also as He was taken up in the cloud, you can almost see the imagery of the Tabernacle in the temple, the Shekinah glory, the cloud of the Lord, the outshining of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Zachariah says He'll come back to the very same place, the Mount of Olives.

It's interesting when Jesus says, "You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now," their next question is, "When are you going to restore the Kingdom?" They have already understood something has happened. The prophets have already told us that the Father divorced the covenant nation of Israel. He issued a writ of divorce so they want to know when it will be restored. Seemingly, it looks like Jesus isn't answering them. He just says, "It's not for you to know times and epochs" but I think He did answer their question, for when the Gospel goes to all the nations He will return and they will start this mission. Jesus is basically telling them, "My covenant people are no longer found in one nation. I have bound the strongman. Now, you go plunder his house. I am going to give you the Holy Spirit, and I'm going to bring My covenant people from every nation. Now, I want you to go to the Jew first because the Gospel got to you through them and I'm not stopping there."

This was the promise to Abraham – "In you, all the nations of the Earth shall be blessed," and Jesus is giving them the Holy Spirit to take this Gospel message to all the nations. When they lift Him up, He will draw all men to Himself. They will have the power to take the Gospel of the Kingdom, to all the nations, and He will bring His people from every tribe and nation. As you share the Gospel you take the preeminence of Christ as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Right here, we have all kinds of theological issues solved for us and one of those is the evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence poured out from the throne among a people, an unstoppable, unashamed, eager, relentless bearing and lifting up of Christ and the Gospel of Christ throughout all the world. It's a powerful witness of Christ. That's the testimony of a Spirit-filled church. Does the Holy Spirit give gifts? Absolutely. Do we walk in the Spirit? Absolutely. Are we led by the Spirit? Absolutely. Is there the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness? Absolutely, but all of those things are subservient to why Jesus sends the Spirit. He sends the Spirit to His people to give us spiritual power, not carnal power, for we don't raise an army. Yes, I think they were wrong in the Crusades. I understand what they were doing, but I don't think that's our armament. We have the armor of Christ, the weapons of the Spirit to take captive the souls of men. This army of the Lord, this Church of Jesus Christ has Christ's armor, Christ's sword, Christ's Word, Christ's righteousness, the gift of faith, and we have the Armorer. The Holy Spirit arms us, so we bear the sword of the Spirit into this world.

I think Jesus is telling His Disciples here in Acts that the Kingdom is not just one nation, it's international. It's not in one geographical location. It's spiritual. It's throughout all the Earth. It's not just one people. It is making a people who were not a people, and there becoming the people of God. As He is answering their question, He is reaffirming what He said in Galilee. "Go make disciples of all the nations." That is Biblical Christianity – an unstoppable Gospel empowered, Holy Spirit saturated, God glorifying, Christ exalting movement of the Gospel from our Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria, to the outermost part of the world. That is what the church is here to do.

I'm writing an article for Ligonier right now on the spheres and sovereignty of spheres, and it's starting off like this; One of the first things I was taught in driver's ed was to stay in your lane. The church has a lane. We're going to stay in our lane. We're not the government. We're not your family. Now, we are a family for your family and we are a family for those who don't have a family but we're not family. God has created, we have sinned, and God redeems. When God created, what was the institution of creation? The family. When we fell into sin, what institution did God bring to keep us from being as sinful whether we're saved or not? What was an instrument of common grace God provided to restrain sin? The government. Then God gives the work of redemption. What is the institution of redemption? It's the church. We are not the family. We are not the state. We are the church.

I know some of you right now are thinking, "Harry is anti-me getting involved in politics." No that is not what I am saying. You may be in the Republican Party or whatever party you're in, but you don't go into that party with that party being your guide. You are a Christian citizen. You engage in the field of politics as a Christian. You engage in your family as a Christian – Christian husband, Christian wife, Christian father, Christian mother, Christian grandparent, praise the Lord! In other words, you live life with a Christian mind, Christian heart, Christ-driven love into every sphere of society, and who is it that God has ordained to equip you to do that? His church. So we have to stay on mission, on message and in ministry, then we will turn out Christian citizens who go into leadership in politics and elsewhere. This is what happens when we disciple.

When the church is discipling we learn how to do marriage, family, be a Christian neighbor and all of those things in Christ and for Christ, because we have a narrow mission with a comprehensive message. Our comprehensive message is teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded in His Word, and lo, He will be with you always. This is done through a Holy Spirit empowered church being Bible saturated, learning the whole counsel of God. Paul said to the Church at Ephesus, after being there three years, "I'm innocent of your blood." Why? Here is my answer. I was on mission, on message, and in ministry. Paul's answer was in Acts 20:26–27 which says [26] *Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all,* [27] *for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.* Paul came preaching one message, Christ and Him crucified. The Gospel is the foundation, the formation, the motivation of the Christian life and it is the center, the circumference, and the substance of the whole counsel of God. Paul brought all that to this church at Ephesus so they could send men and women out and whatever they do they could do all to the glory of God. Paul did all this because Jesus said, "If the church does its job, its people will become salt of the Earth, the light of the world."

The Christian has a broad mission, to love mercy, to do justice, not the Frankfurt social justice, Biblical justice. It's called the sanctities of God's law. How do you love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind? How do you love your neighbor as yourself? You walk humbly with God. That's what we're supposed to do as a church. We need to stay in our lane to put the people that need to be in the other lanes, when we produce them by God's grace with the means of grace, and then we who have gathered in large groups and small groups for discipleship are now going to scatter, being evangelized and disciplined with the whole counsel of God to be the salt of the Earth and the light of the world.

When we turned worship services into church growth enterprises instead of worship services that lift up Christ, doing both equipping and evangelism, the church just went five miles wide, one-inch deep. So we're not salty, because the church is not doing its job of making

disciples. This is important because Satan attacks the church and he loves to attack the church from the outside in and from the inside out. The two-front war of World War II, a Civil War, the American Revolution is a constant tactic and a strategy, and Satan has it all the time. Therefore, we have to respond to it. We are in a situation where we have this thing called progressive Christianity. I believe it is the same battle with some slight differences, that the Church had to fight in the 19th century, at the turn of the century, to the 20th century. It was called then liberal Christianity.

What did liberal Christianity say? Liberal Christianity did not start out to destroy Christianity. On the contrary, its selling point is, "We're going to save Christianity. Here is the modern mind in the 19th century, scientific thought, the industrial age, the rising and even the beginning of information and communication and mobilization and the church has a great opportunity at the turn of the century, but first, we have to rescue the church from cultural irrelevance. The church is going to be consigned to the dustbin of history if you don't make the modifications." They're not talking about do you go from a mimeograph to a printing, they're talking about the mission and the message of the church. If you don't modify it, if you don't make changes, you're going to lose your children. Therefore, its motivation was to save the church from cultural irrelevance. Its mission was cultural transformation. In fact, Mainline Protestantism even started writing a magazine called the Christian Century. Their mission was cultural transformation and then before long, the message began to change. Why did the message change? It is because mission always controls message. Whatever your functional mission becomes, eventually, your message will be conformed to it.

In the 1980s, the church decided our mission is church growth, numbers, nickels, and noise. That's our mission. So, what happened? We lost the Gospel. We got a pragmatic gospel, an entertainment gospel and we preached a gospel that would put the meat in the seat on Sunday, not souls converted to get to heaven. Then came the era of psychology, and what people really need is they just need more information and a better view of themselves. They just need some self-esteem help. Out of that comes the therapy gospel. People need to be successful. One of the biggest programs in the 1980s was Success in Your Life or for today, Your Best Life Now. That book is right. If you go by that book, your best life is now. The one you got coming's not going to be too good. So, here comes a prosperity gospel. Come to Jesus, and you get healthy, wealthy, and wise. You can name it and claim it, confess it and possess it, believe it and receive it.

Then comes the need for social justice. I'm all for justice. The Bible tells me to disciple you. It's called Biblical justice. I'm not for social justice. Social justice is totally redefined, anti-Christian, and self-centered and has no solutions, but because we wanted our goal to be social justice, then we get an adulterated message of the social gospel. That's what continually happens in our world. So, if your mission is cultural transformation, then eventually, your message will be determined not by the Bible, but by cultural accommodation.

In liberal Christianity, that's exactly what happened. "We have to get rid of the virgin birth, the resurrection of the body, the atonement for our sins and all that for the modern mind just isn't going to accept this supernatural miracle stuff, and all this redemptive stuff." So then, you get a theological movement. Christian liberalism, which is going to make us culturally relevant to transform the culture, then becomes defined by the culture because the culture won't give us a seat at the table if we hold onto these essentials, or as they were called then, the fundamentals of the faith.

When I saw that progressive Christianity was the same as liberal Christianity, therefore just like liberal Christianity, had the wrong motivation, the wrong mission, and therefore, ended

up with the wrong message, it was called theological liberalism, I knew that's exactly what is going to happen here. Progressive Christianity is the same as liberal Christianity. Doesn't everything I just said sound familiar to you? "If the church doesn't modify, you're going to lose your children." I don't think it's because we preach the Gospel we're losing our children, I think it's because we're not preaching the Gospel we lose our children. Progressive Christianity says we want to save the church from the 20th to the 21st century from cultural irrelevance, because our culture needs transforming, seek the good of the city.

You might be thinking of Jeremiah 29:7 that says, "Seek the welfare of the city." But the city doesn't determine its welfare. God tells us to seek the lost and disciple them. That brings welfare to the city. That's why Philip went to Samaria. It says in Acts 8:5–8, [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.*** The whole city rejoiced because of the Gospel Philip brought to them.

Here is where I get the pushback from Progressive Christianity and liberalism. As soon as I recommended Machen's book, Christianity and Liberalism, I received messages like, "Harry, where in the evangelical church are we denying the inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth, etc.? We're not doing that." My response was, "Yes, we are not yet denying the virgin birth, the inerrancy of Scripture, but the only reason we haven't done it yet is the culture hasn't demanded for us to do it yet. Right now, they're demanding that we change our mission." You become a philanthropic social institution, or we will have no place for you and so we are changing our mission, which will end up changing our message, when the culture gets around to telling us these things have to change, which they already have. The cultural is already saying things like, "You better get rid of your sexual ethics and your view of marriage, because if you don't condemn it and celebrate what we're saying, we'll shut you down."

So why is this happening? There are five reasons this is happening and I don't have time to give them to you in this study but they will be in the next study. Progressive Christianity is liberal Christianity 2.0 and there is a reason I don't believe it's Biblical Christianity. It hasn't gotten to the message totally yet, but it will get totally to the message, because mission controls the message. This church, Briarwood, does not belong to the PCA, nor does it belong to you. Frank Barker, the founding pastor of Briarwood and I have talked about this, and the thing that brings the biggest pain to us is when somebody says, "Do you go to Harry's church? Do you go to Frank's church?" This isn't our church. When I came here, they asked me, "Pastor, do you want to change the mission statement?" There was no reason for me to because mission statements don't change with pastors. Gift mix may change, but the mission isn't determined by the pastor. The mission is determined by Jesus. Jesus said to go make disciples, and then gave us His Word wrapped in 66 books in the contours of the Gospel of grace. Then He told us to take it to your Jerusalem, and to all the world.

Perhaps you are thinking about Acts 17:6b when it says [6b] City authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also" and thinking this might sound like cultural transformation, but to me it doesn't. In Paul's three missionary journeys his mission nor his message was to change the world. He did not have a mission of cultural transformation for that was a consequence. He had a mission of sinner transformation and when sinners get saved, marriages, families, neighborhoods, and cities get changed, but that's not the mission, it's the consequence. The mission is rescue the parish, care for the dying,

teach them of Jesus, who is mighty to save. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the opportunity to begin this process of trying to understand what's going on in our present age, and Father, please, I know you can do it, Lord and I know I can't do it, but please help these people, my dear friends and fellows in flock. I love them so much. Please help them hang onto this until the next study and we'll give You the praise as we attempt to be equipped, not only for the age to come, but this present age, so that we are not captivated by the spirit of the age, but by the Word of God and the Spirit of God, for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

I do still recommend to you J. Gresham Machen's book, Christianity and Liberalism until the book Biblical Christianity and Progressive Christianity comes out. I don't know who'll write it or when it'll come out. Until then, get the Legacy edition of Machen's book, which has chapters from the Westminster faculty with each chapter that is extremely helpful. May God's grace, mercy, and peace be with all of you and Jesus, thank You for Your promise, "I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Praise Your name, Lord Jesus.