

# The Testimony of William Tyndale

*Reformation Month 2010*

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Good evening. I ask you to imagine a time when it was not possible to have the Scriptures in your hand in your language. You and I have been accustomed to responding to a preacher, a minister, a pastor, when he begins his message and asks you to turn with him to a certain passage of Scripture, and without thinking about it, we do so, but imagine if that were not possible. You would be totally dependent on the trustworthiness of the minister. You would have no means of comparing what he says with what God says. You trust him, to be sure, you respect him, but if you have no way of knowing whether it is his message or God's message, in what spiritual bondage would you lie?

That was the situation in the English speaking country of England 500 years ago. It was against the law of church and state to translate and publish the Bible in English, though at that time already on the continent, the Scriptures were available in French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, German, Danish, Polish and Czech, but it was not possible in English. Think of the poverty of soul that that engendered.

My name tonight is William Tyndale. Imagine that I am he and that I've come to tell you the story of my life. Tyndale, tine dale, tindal, actually a family name was Hutchens. We lived in the north of England and my family went into voluntary exile to the south of England during the Wars of the Roses up north, and we became the residents of the valley, the vale or the dale of the Tyne River, t-y-n-e, Tyne River. So we lived in the dale of the Tyne. We lived in Tynedale. So we were the Hutchens of Tynedale and soon Hutchens disappeared and Tyndale was all that remained.

At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, at the end of the 1400s, I was born. Very little is remembered of my earliest days and I don't remember them either, and when I was 13, I was sent to a grammar school, Latin, grammar, because all advanced learning was done in Latin; subjects were taught in Latin, whatever the subject was. I went to what is spelled Magdalen Hall. I guess they pronounce it maudlin, and sometimes it was very much so. Magdalen Hall of Magdalen College, kind of a prep school at Oxford University. Eventually took my degree, entered Magdalen College, maudlin college, and at my 20<sup>th</sup> year was ordained a priest.

Now, my teacher of Greek was Erasmus. Most of you know him, have heard of him. A fence straddler. Compromiser. Scholar par excellence. If you received a letter from Erasmus, you would not read it, digest it, file it away, or worse, discard, you would frame it, put it on the wall, hand it down to your family as an antique, a thing of value. He was the scholar of the day. He, it was said, had parts enough, wit enough to discover the truth but not parts enough to defend it. He took no side on an issue so he was never to be opposed. He said once, "I hold to the good decisions of Pope and Emperor because they are pious. I hold to the bad decisions of Pope and Emperor because they are safe." That's Erasmus.

Well, he taught Greek and, indeed, you remember in 1516, he for the first time published the Greek New Testament in alternate pages. He corrected the Vulgate Latin with the Greek and presented an improved corrected translation of the Latin, a version of the Latin, side-by-side with the Greek.

One hundred and fifty years before my time, John Wycliffe had made a translation of the New Testament into English but he translated it from the only source available to him, from the Latin. Now, Latin was not a language of theology, of thought, of philosophy, of concept, Latin was a language of law and government and action and deed. The Greeks had a word for it, but the Latins didn't in every case. The subtleties of meaning, how many different senses do we have in the use of the word "love," for example. We have one word, "love," and we use it many different ways but you can never tell how its meant just by looking at the word, but the Greeks had a lot of different words for "love," all different kinds of love. I mean, you love, some of you, you love pizza. You also love your mother. I think not in the same way, and there are many different variations in between. The translation of Wycliffe was from the Latin and, therefore, God saw to it that it did not have wide distribution.

Movable type printing, you of the computer age know very little of the treasury of movable type, what it meant to a civilization which for centuries reproduced words by hand. How many of you have ever copied a book of the Bible by hand? Philemon, maybe. Alright. But how about the book of Exodus? Any copy of Wycliffe's New Testament had to have been copied by hand. No wonder it was inaccessible. Financially it is said to have cost the equivalent of a year's day labor, and it was deficient in that respect as well. God was preparing the tool and the time. It was the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century when movable type printing was introduced in the Western world, and Erasmus in 1516 made possible this tool of the text available in Greek from which I was eventually to translate the New Testament and then part of the Old into English, the same source from which Martin Luther translated the Bible into German. God wonderfully prepared the technology as well as the times.

Well, I came, though a priest of the Church, the Church of Rome, the only church organized that there was at the time, this was before the Reformation had come into England, I was a priest but I came to know Jesus Christ as my personal Savior by reading the epistles of Paul in the Greek text that Erasmus had prepared. The Scripture was my preacher, the Holy Spirit was my teacher, and I came to know redemption, the finished

work of Jesus Christ, release, redemption and release from the penalty and the guilt of sin.

Well, my Greek teacher, Erasmus, moved to the other important university and I followed him to Cambridge University where last week some of you were introduced to the Scripture men who gathered at the White Horse Inn led by old Bilney, Thomas Bilney, who witnessed to young theologues, led many to Christ. Frith was among them. Ridley. Latimer. John Rogers. John Rogers later made a translation into English under the pseudonym of T. Matthews, and he, like all the others except for Miles Coverdale, also one of the group, was eventually martyred for the Gospel. All but Coverdale under Bloody Mary. Miles Coverdale lived to be 81 years old, died a natural death. Eighty-one was twice the average lifespan in my time, and it was twice my lifetime, my lifespan as well. Well, we enjoyed what came to be known as Little Germany, that is, this group at the White Horse Inn, because we discussed the German Reform of Luther and his works, and we were laying the groundwork for a movement that was to emerge in our England.

After many years there assisting at Cambridge, I felt the need to get out. I was not a faculty member. I was not a staff member. I was enjoying the academic environment but I was not to be a professional student. I sought a release, an outlet, an opportunity, and I became the tutor to two young sons of Sir John and Lady Mary Walsh at Little Sodbury Manor. Little Sodbury Manor was a manor house. It was the big house. It was the important place in the town, and as such, it was the site of hospitality for passersby. Men of importance of church and state would stop and be welcomed overnight and at Lady Walsh's table, and it was customary after the table board to sit around with the evening beverage and discuss matters. A traveler was pumped for news of what is going on elsewhere. "Where have you been? What's going on there?" Instant knowledge of the countryside was rare.

In those days of serving these two young boys, the elder of whom was six only, with my own rooms in the third floor, plenty of time for contemplation, study, thought, and in the afternoons I would often walk through the countryside and become acquainted with John Ploughman, that is, the equivalent of your John Doe, the average, ordinary, typical, common man. I had been reared in the university setting. God was preparing me for the language of the common people. I did not then know for what purpose, but God beautifully anticipated what he knew was to be needed in time to come and I talked with the man of the field and I learned the language of the common man.

I walked a few miles to the town of Bristol and often preached there in St. Adeline's church, St. Adeline, the only church in all of England with that name, probably for good reason, and was noticed by an older priest and calmly and quietly warned the direction of my preaching might bring trouble upon me in time to come. He also suggested that the pope was antichrist, a thought which then, for me, was distant.

Well, found opportunity to discuss, I say, with these men of importance in church and state and I learned that churchmen knew very little of the Scriptures. They would counter my observations with references to the church fathers or the doctors of the church or the

decrees of pope or council, and I would say, "But the Scripture, but Christ says thus." And on one occasion which was to be fundamental and formative to my remaining years, one of these churchmen in frustration at his inability to respond to the argument from the Scripture said, "It is more important that we know the Pope's laws than God's laws," and at such a thought, I was amazed and responded without thinking, "I defy the Pope and all his laws! If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause that a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!"

Lady Walsh was not pleased that I had offended the important visitor. I was surprised at what I had just said but upon a moment's reflection, I was aware that I had in that moment declared the testament of my life to come. I had established the intent to do what was against the law in England. Ah, but with one exception: it was against the law except with episcopal permission. A-ha, there's the out. Except with the permission of the bishop.

It was time for me to leave Little Sodbury Manor. My host and hostess were gracious to relieve me and perhaps somewhat relieved to relieve me, and gave me good recommendation, letters of testament, and I went on my way to London, London town, a small town then, hardly 20,000 population, the square mile, the city of London. It has grown some since, I understand. For there I was to look up for the bishop, Bishop Tunstall of London, to seek permission to translate the Scriptures into English. I'm a scholar, a churchman, and I'm doing this with good intent, and I asked permission to do so. I brought copies of some translations I had done from the Greek, a speech of Isocrates, which, I'm sure, Bishop Tunstall had never heard of, and showed him thus my ability and he, after waiting weeks to receive me. I didn't know he was so busy he had so much else to do, and in the meantime I was graciously boarded by Henry Monmouth, who years later was to suffer for the assistance he gave me. He was a merchant and had contacts on the continent and I preached there briefly at St. Dunstan's Church, and he, Monmouth, heard me and we became friends.

Well, refused permission. The bishop said, "Ah, we have no doubt of your ability but we have no need for your services. We do not doubt you shall obtain employment elsewhere, given your ability, but we..." I did not seek employment, I sought permission to translate the Scriptures into English, that they might be copied, printed, transmitted, spread abroad and do the work which only the book of God can do. It became obvious to me, therefore, and I say this with hesitation, that if I were to do this work to which I was now clearly called, I must do it abroad, away from my motherland. I must voluntarily go into exile. I don't know what exile means to you but exile was one of the most delicious punishments short of death which a king could impose upon an enemy. It was a living death. To be a stranger everywhere, a citizen nowhere. Not to tread again upon the soil of your native land, to see your family, your patrimony, to hear your language spoken, to be a wanderer.

I set sail for the continent, watched my homeland recede in the distance with heavy heart and moist eyes, but with firm resolve that I was proceeding in the will of heaven. I came to Homburg and then up the Rhine to Wittenberg where Luther had begun the Reformation. I was not a Lutheran, I was not joining his movement exactly, but his town

of Wittenberg offered tolerant opportunity, and in 9 or 10 months translated the New Testament, wrote introductions to each of the books, and now sought for a printer. Went to the city of Cologne where was a significant printing industry, and found eventually someone willing to undertake this enterprise. He had proceeded to prepare 3,000 copies in large folio size, and had proceeded through the Gospel of Mark before he was found out by the local authorities. Another Catholic official wanted to print the memoirs of a minor abbot of the past and he came upon and he heard the workmen at this printing house boasting that, "Soon all England will be Lutheran," and he investigated and saw what was going on, reported it to the authorities. We got word of it and happily escaped with the 3,000 copies through the Gospel of Mark and went to the city of Worms, where you know Luther also had been, and there found another printer who completed that edition of 3,000 but also prepared 6,000 of an octavo, smaller sized, more portable sized edition, and these soon, through merchants from both sides of the channel, the channel which the French never called the English channel, the channel, they were smuggled into England, sometimes in bags of grain, and they were available to the folk in England for the equivalent of three day's wage. Quite a difference from a year. Sometimes the farmer, John Ploughman, would trade a load of hay for a copy. It became known as the Hay Book, and Bishop Tunstall who had forbidden this enterprise, became aware of them and announced a public burning of the book of God on the west steps of St. Paul's Cathedral, and made a big thing of it. Burned the book. I heard of this and I said, "They burn my book, given opportunity, they will burn me also," as Luther had said when he made a bonfire of a Papal Bull. They burned and they would burn Christ if they could.

Well, enterprising merchant came to Bishop Tunstall and informed him that if he, the bishop, were willing to pay for them, he, the merchant, could obtain great quantities of this book for him to burn. And the bishop agreed. Paid for the books. Burned them. And the money went back to the continent to sponsor a new edition better and improved, I was constantly improving the translation, and God was honored again.

Well, now to the city of Marburg in Germany, there to begin the translation of the Old Testament and I did not know Hebrew as well as the Greek, but I laboriously learned and I was able, God had given me the gift of language. It was not in me, it was not to my credit, but I learned languages easily. That's not true of all of you, I'm sure, but I taught myself French and German and Spanish and Italian. I had spoken English at home. I learned Latin grammar, studied Greek, and it was not with great difficulty. So now I proceed with the Hebrew. Having written, I say, the introduction of each of several books of the New Testament, while at Marburg I also wrote several discussions. I wrote a commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. I wrote the "Practice of Prelates," in which I described the actions of churchmen that were inconsistent, to say the least, with their calling. I wrote on the parable of the wicked mammon, an exposition of the justification by faith, other things, and now for eight or nine months, worked on the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, the books of Moses, had completed it here in Marburg.

Now went up to Antwerp to take ship to Homburg, there to find a printer to print the Pentateuch, and here is a lesson each of us must know, each of us must learn for a time in

life when he may need it. Onboard ship from Antwerp to Homburg with all my goods, all very portable, my clothing and little else, and this treasured manuscript text of the labor of nine months. There was no copy of any kind. You have many kinds of copies. I've heard of such things as carbon copy and photocopy and I don't know what I'm talking about. Some of you know how true that is. But this treasured manuscript. It was a manuscript, manus is "hand," scripto is "to write." It was written by hand. And we suffered shipwreck on the journey and all goods on board were lost at sea, and the labor of nine months was stillborn and I arrived at Homburg destitute and in despair and sought out lodging and found my friend from the White Horse Inn in Cambridge, Miles Coverdale who knew Hebrew better than I did, and together we redid a better version of the Pentateuch for publication. The lesson, men and women: God may sometimes take from us something we deem greatly valued in order to give us something he knows is far better.

Without knowing it, I was sought and hounded for the next several years. It was 1524 when I crossed the channel and left my homeland. Twelve years only remained in my life. I did not know that then, but I was moving from city to city in advance of those who had been commissioned to find me, apprehend me, and arrest me, and all the time ignorant that I was being pursued. God kept me moving. I finally came to Antwerp where I settled down, more or less. I never had a home once I left home. Never really had steady employment. Built nothing, no institution. Started no movement. I was just a tool on the go. But in Antwerp was a center of commerce between the continent and England. A number of merchants resided there, had a house which was a kind of an international center and it was somehow immune from local authorities and what went on there was almost like an island of England away from the land. Thomas Points was the owner of the home. He was a distant relative of Sir John and Lady Walsh where I had tutored sons, and I was given hospitality there for several weeks and enjoyed the opportunity to minister to the merchants, held Bible studies, and was comfortably cared for and all unknowing that there was being prepared my undoing.

A young man, Henry Phillips was his name, the third son of a member of Parliament in England, a ne'er-do-well, a boy, a young man whose father had given him a significant sum of money with which to pay a bill the father owed, the son did not pay the bill, the father did not know it had not been paid, the father's reputation was ruined, the son was now employed by the authorities to befriend me in order to apprehend me. He came to Louvain, the University of Louvain, some 30 miles from Antwerp. He posed as a student. He came to Thomas Points's home in Antwerp. He became friendly with us and it was comfortable to be able to enjoy English conversation and what has been going on back in our land and all. The occasion arrived when he and I arranged to meet in the town for lunch one day. En route, he embarrassedly asked to borrow from me two pounds of money. He was my host and yet he was borrowing from money with which to pay for our lunch. Two pounds. Two pounds then was sufficient to care for a family of four for two months. Those values have changed somewhat since.

In the town, we had to pass through a narrow alley between two buildings en route to our destination. It was not possible to walk abreast, the distance was too narrow, so he

deferred to me, slightly elder. He was taller than I. We went through the alley and as we approached the end of the alley, I sensed that his hand was raised above me, behind me, and pointing to me, and as we came to the end of the alley, he thrust me from behind into the hands of waiting officers who bound me as he had prepared, and took me some six miles from Brussels to Vilvoorde Castle, the dungeon of which was to be my last earthly residence for 15 months before any trial was held.

The trial finally. Forced to write out my opinions on theological truths. They wanted a public renunciation, recantation, so that any who have followed in my path would have their faith shattered by my betrayal. Those 15 months were difficult. They were indescribable environment of dampness, of vermin, of rodents, of cold, of darkness. I wrote a letter to the governor of the prison who was changed periodically, requesting from my effects back in Thomas Points's home a heavier cloak, my books. The three books I sought: the Hebrew grammar, the Hebrew dictionary, and the Hebrew Bible with which to continue the translation, which had been continued through 2 Chronicles by the time I died, later completed by Coverdale. I asked for a lantern as well, to be able to work. That letter is the only extant example of my handwriting still in your time. None of the manuscripts of the Scripture translations exist.

Finally, October 6, 1536, at dawn, led to the church. I had not been extradited to England. I do not know what would have been my end had that succeeded, but the German officials held me and were handling my conclusion. Was formally defrocked. My clerical robes put on one at a time and then removed one at a time so that I stood with a simple rough tunic only. Into my hand thrust a chalice and the wafer and then rudely snatched both. Then led to a stake as tall as a man which was to be for me a ladder to heaven. It was a vertical upright with a very short transect. Across the top, not crossing but resting on the top, a short chain attached to this top bar down to my neck so as to hold my body upright during the burning that was to come. Then behind my neck on the vertical member, a hole had been drilled through which from behind a stout rope was threaded and then around my neck and then back through the same hole so that both ends of the rope were behind me and it partly encircled my neck.

I was asked, as was customary, if I had any final word. They were so concerned to draw from me a confession and a renunciation and to throw myself on the mercy of the church, mercy that I did not see, and permitted, as was customary, a final word. My final word was a prayer to heaven, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!"

At the signal, the executioner behind me pulled on both ends of the rope with all his might. I was strangled in seconds. The fire was ignited and soon I was translated to a better world. No ashes were allowed to remain. They were mixed with earth and scattered so that there would be no memorial. There is no grave. There is no gravestone. There is, I understand, now a small monument in London near the shores of the Thames, not far from Big Ben. The only remaining monument is the book in your hand. Ninety percent of your Authorized Versions' phrases and terms come from my translation. From one language to another, a number of words can be chosen and many of the expressions that you have memorized first came from William Tyndale's heart, mind and pen.

The psalmist says, "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." Publish. Spread abroad. Publish glad tidings. Tidings of peace. Tidings of Jesus. Redemption and release.

Treasure the book in your hand. It has cost far more than the money you exchanged for it. Amen.

Speaker. I'd like to turn tonight to Psalm 119. We do thank Dr. Panosian again for speaking to us. He talks of Little Sodbury where Tyndale was, it takes me back to a visit we had there some time ago as a family. A little chapel where Tyndale preached at that time is still there. His pulpit is still in existence too. But very sadly, Tyndale's message in England is almost extinct, how times have changed. A brother has referred to the word of God there and how the Lord gave the word and yet it was the company of those that published it.

I want to draw your attention to the words of Psalm 119:130. We're indebted to Dr. Panosian again for this tremendous account of the life and labors of Tyndale, and as you've just heard, he was mightily used in giving us an English Bible. I thought of today's, tonight's service and my mind turned to this verse of Scripture. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." We've just heard an account tonight of Tyndale, a man of steely determination, a man of incredible courage, powerful insight, meticulous study. As I read the life of Tyndale and I've heard these words tonight, it's obvious that Tyndale was not driven by personal pride in his scholarly genius. He was a tremendous scholar but he was not driven by that. He was driven by a desire, a firm conviction that what England needed more than anything else at that time was a knowledge of the word of God.

My first introduction to Tyndale as a young believer surrounded his now famous statement that he made to that prominent church leader of the time when he said, "I defy the Pope and all his laws," and how he went on that day to say that if God spared him life ere many years, he would cause a boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scripture than that religious leader did. Even as a young man in a very hostile environment, but as a young man Tyndale recognized the value of the word of God. He knew that God's word and God's word alone would bring light to darkened souls and bring liberty to those in the bondage of their sin and in the grip of false religion, and his work of translating the Scriptures had that desired effect.

It's interesting this past week to read the words of John Foxe. Foxe is the author of "Foxe's Book of Martyrs." It's a book you ought to read. When he came to write of Tyndale, and as you've just heard tonight, Tyndale was burned at the stake, John Foxe said of him, "Master Tyndale took in hand to translate the Old Testament, finishing the five books of Moses, with sundry most learned and godly prologues most worthy to be read and read again by all good Christians. These books being sent over into England, it cannot be spoken what a door of light they opened to the eyes of the whole English

nation, which before were shut up in darkness." I think that testimony to William Tyndale emphasizes the dramatic impact this man's work had. The word of God in the English language was used to enlighten and deliver many from their spiritual darkness.

William Tyndale did not establish a school of theology, he did not rise to prominence in the church, but in many ways he did something even more important, he placed an English translation of the Bible into the hands of the people, and as a result, their eyes were opened to the truth. And in many ways, that really ought not to surprise us. I say that because there are numerous references in the Scriptures themselves which speak of the word of God as a light. Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Isaiah 8:20 links the thoughts of God's word, his law and his testimony to light. The Apostle Peter describes the word of God, that more sure word of prophecy, as light. And then you have the words of this text, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

I think those words are very suitable as we consider the life and labors of William Tyndale. His epic work was a light across England. Many received spiritual understanding as a result of that work. But the application of that text, Psalm 119:130, doesn't end there. Maybe you're asking tonight, "Why do we remember these great men of God? Why do we have services that mark the Reformation in this particular way? Is it just to remember, just to rejoice in what God has done in the past? Is it just really to respect great men of God from history? Is that all?" That's certainly part of it. It's good for us to remember these men and their work, but it's not the main part. It's in order to teach and emphasize the same truths and explain the same Gospel to men and women, the same truth that the word of God and the doctrines of God's grace are just as important, just as relevant today as they were back then in the 1500s.

Psalm 119:130 is applicable to every soul in this service. "The entrance of thy words giveth light." When I look at that text of Scripture, I want to be very brief tonight, I see three things that I want to draw your attention to and leave with you. I discover, first of all, that without God, man is in spiritual darkness. Without God, man is in spiritual darkness. Prior to the Reformation, around the days of William Tyndale, almost all of Europe was engulfed in the dark superstitions and sinful ways of Roman Catholicism. True Christianity was hidden underneath a black cloud of false religion. Men and women were blind. They were blind to the truth of God's word. They stumbled about in spiritual ignorance. They preferred the empty rituals, the indulgences, the penances, the confessionals, the Masses, the relics of Rome, to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and in many ways they knew no better. They knew no better. They were blind and they lived in an atmosphere of deep spiritual darkness.

What was true of men and women then is true of men and women today. Without the Gospel, without God, sinners are in spiritual darkness. Ephesians 5:18, the Apostle Paul spoke of those who were sometimes darkness. In other words, they were dark spiritually. They did not know God. They had no true love for true righteousness. They were blind to their spiritual state before God. They groped about for happiness, they groped about for hope in the things of the world, and they could never find them. They preferred sin for as

Christ himself taught, "Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." What was true then in the days of Paul is true tonight. The human heart is in a state of natural spiritual darkness. A man or woman may have the greatest education, they may have the greatest employment, they may exercise the greatest intellectual energy, they may have everything else in place in life but without God, that soul is in spiritual darkness.

What does that mean, to be dark? To be in the dark spiritually? What does it mean for a sinner to be in spiritual darkness? It means he has no real hope and no real joy or no real peace. He may have the pleasures of sin, he may have the pleasures of this world, but in his heart there's a darkness, there's a lack of joy, a lack of peace, and a lack of real hope. Without Christ in the world, there is no hope. That means also he is still in the guilt of his sin. He has sinned against God and that guilt lies heavy upon his heart. He's ignorant also of the true and living God. He's on a road that leads to eternal darkness and that has to be a most solemn thing. You read so often in Scripture of the parables of the Lord Jesus Christ where men are taken and cast into outer darkness because without God, man is spiritually dark.

Let me ask you tonight: is that your position in this meeting? Perhaps come tonight because you've an interest in the Reformation, an interest in the history of these men of God, but are you still in the darkness and the deadness of your sin? Is that how you are before God tonight, in spiritual ignorance and the darkness and the deadness of sin?

I look at this text again in Psalm 119 and I discover the word of God is full of Gospel light. "The entrance of thy words giveth light." That text presents a great contrast. On one hand there is the darkness, the gloominess of sin, the dark dreadful future of a lost soul being cast into outer darkness and that forever, but on the other hand of the text stands the glorious light of the word, and you'll notice here it is the word, "thy word." "The entrance of thy words giveth light." The light is all of God.

The words that are mentioned here in this text are the words of God himself and I can't read that text and not think of what is written in the book of Genesis when this world was formed and it was dark and the Lord said, "Let there be light: and there was light." The word of God, the word of his power brought forth light and the written word of God is full of light also. That's what Tyndale recognized. He recognized that the light of the Gospel had dawned upon his own soul. As he studied the New Testament under Erasmus, the Lord opened his heart to that truth. The light of the Gospel dawned upon him. He felt the darkness of his own soul prior to that time but as the word of God came, he felt the light of the Gospel and he understood the Lord had opened his heart. And God's word is truth. And God's word is light. I know we live in a day where men reject the word of God, reject the teaching of God's word completely, but there is no other Gospel but this one.

"The entrance of thy words giveth light." The Gospel is light. It's described here as light because it shows man where he really is with God. The Bible tells us all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. It tells us there is none righteous, no, not one. There is

none that seeketh after God. There is none that understandeth. It tells us there is no deference for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And the Bible alone tells us where we really are with God, and in our sin we are cut off from him. We are strangers to God. We are without Christ and without hope in this world.

As I read through the word of God, I discover the light of that truth showing me where I am with God. I'm a sinner before him. It's light also because it reveals the only Savior of sinners. Christ is the light of the world and these words in Scripture testify of him. That's the work of the Holy Spirit, to testify of Christ, and as the Spirit of God has authored this book and given us this book for every word is given by inspiration of God, it reveals Christ to us. Christ is the sinner's only hope.

The Gospel is light also because it alone brings hope and life and peace into the heart. How powerful was that word in Tyndale's life. With all of his studies and all of his learning, it was the Gospel that opened his heart. As God the Spirit brought that word to bear upon a soul, Tyndale had hope and peace and life through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel is light and it's the only true light for darkened sinners.

I said the world casts the word of God away, prefers its own message, prefers its own thing, prefers its own religion, and what do you find tonight in the world but a world of sinking in despair, a world sinking in darkness, a world of sinking in guilt and shame and regret because it's turned away from the light of God's word. The word of God is full of Gospel light.

My friend, if you're not saved, that's what you need tonight, to know the light of the Gospel dawn on your soul. That brings me to my last thought, that the light of the Gospel is to be received if we are to know God's great salvation. The text in Psalm 119 simply states, "The entrance of thy words giveth light." It's more than just a standing at the entrance. The word "entrance" there has the idea of "going in; going on; going deeper; going further." It's a word that pictures a true reception of the word of God. Not standing on the threshold, not standing looking in, but actually entering in and going beyond the periphery. He has the idea of that which is accepted, that which is brought right in, and isn't that the message of the Gospel? Isn't that the call of God's word? Christ must be accepted. To many as has received him, to them give he power to become the sons of God, to those who believe on his name.

The call of the Gospel tonight is that you repent and believe the Gospel. That's how it was with Tyndale. That's how it was with Latimer. That's how it was with Luther. That's how it was with Calvin. These Reformers that we'll look at over the next number of weeks, they repented, they believed the Gospel. The light of the Gospel came and they received Christ as their Savior and they were never the same again.

When I look at that text, I see it full of Christ, but Christ is described in John's Gospel as the Word. He's often referred to as the Incarnate Word, the Word made flesh and dwelling amongst us. Christ is the Word and so you could read the text in that way, "The entrance of thy words giveth light." Christ is the Word and when a sinner receives Christ,

they pass from darkness, they pass into light. They pass from death to life, a life that they have not only in time but for all of God's eternity.

Tyndale experienced that by the grace of God. Saved out of the darkness of his sin and brought into the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and he sought to spread that word, realized that's what his fellow countrymen needed more than anything else in the world, to read of a Savior who is mighty to save, and that's the message you need tonight if you're not saved, that you need Christ. Light now and light in eternity because those who are saved in time will be with Christ forevermore.

I pray as you have listened to this presentation tonight, we've considered this text of Scripture very briefly, that God will come and write his word upon your heart. It's not that we want to fill your mind just with historical facts but we want you to realize tonight that Christ is mighty to save. And I trust that you'll think upon these things and if you're not saved, that you'll come tonight to know Christ as your Savior. He alone, he alone can deal with the darkness of your sin. He alone can deal with the darkness of the future that lies before you out of Christ because those who do not know Christ will be cast into outer darkness.

Believer, let us take to heart what we've heard of Tyndale's life, a man who hazarded everything to publish God's word. May we ever do the same. Let's take a handful of Gospel tracts and give them out. Seek to win souls for Christ. Seek to put the word into the hands of our friends and our neighbors and our loved ones, that they too might know the Christ whom we serve and rejoice in the fullness of his grace as we do. May God give us courage and strength in these days.

I trust the Lord blesses our hearts tonight. We thank him for his presence with us, with Dr. Panosian being amongst us. We trust the Lord will bless his word to our souls.