

# Reformation Commemoration

*Reformation Day 2012*

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## **Reformed Congregations of New Zealand**

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Now this evening is, say, a special night and our children, no doubt, have heard of that today perhaps at school, why is October 31 a very special evening for the Reformed congregation and many other churches within Europe, within the United States, within New Zealand, Australia and really all over the world. Now we know that perhaps from that history study that this is the day that Martin Luther nailed on the church door, we wouldn't do that today but that was the notice board in those days. If you wanted anything to say, then you nailed it to the church door, obviously a wooden door, not a glass one. And that was, he wrote there some thoughts about objections that began to form in his heart against a lot of the practices that he grew up with in his day and age.

Now we call that the day of Reformation, October 31, and as you look on your outline today, I call the Reformation the dawn of a new era, an era means a time period in history, because if I ask you what's the Reformation all about, I think most of us would say, "Well, it has to do with the church. That's when the gospel was recovered," as Mr. Ira Hodges thanked the Lord for in his prayer. And that's very true but I think that's a very limited view of the Reformation and in my first part of the talk tonight, I just want to alert you to the fact that you cannot understand our society today, our society, I'm not talking about the church, without the Reformation. What we enjoy today in New Zealand even in our society outwardly, in our political system, is directly coming from the Reformation and the faithful teaching of God's word by men who God raised up.

Why is that important to know? All young people and all of us, we often face a very hostile world out there who make it sound like that we Christians are the problem, we who hold to biblical views are the problem for progress in society, and when people say that to me, I can flatly say to them, "You've never studied the history of your world. You don't even know what you're talking about. You're a foolish man." Because the greatest progress that the world has ever seen in our society, in the world of science, in the world of art, in the world of music, in the world obviously of the church all stems back to the beginning of the Reformation. So if you know that, then you have a little more weapons in your hand. Men like Richard Dawkins, he always is banging on the church as being the problem in this world that we are today, and it's not true.

The Reformation, please, let's not think it only affected the church. It affected nations. It affected governments. For example, before the Reformation men who tried to do some science were put under excommunication if they thought, came up with something that contradicted the teachings of the Church. For example, the Roman Church always taught that the earth circles the sun. The sun circles the earth. And there a came scientist that said that's not true and guess what happened to him? He was excommunicated from the Church because the Church suppressed science because it would challenge the teachings of the Church, it would challenge their authority.

So again, one example and there are hundreds of them where the Reformation has completely liberalized, and I mean with that word, freed our society to be what is has become in many ways and it's important for us to be aware of that, you know, that you do not get yourself completely talked into the corner by people who say, "Oh, you Christians are the problem." Then please ask them, ask them a couple questions, remind them of the freedom that we have today, that we every three years have an election in this country to reelect a new government. Do you like that? You ask them that: do you like that? You like it if you get rid of your government if you don't like them so you don't vote for them? Thank God for that who raised up men like Luther, Calvin and all the Reformers, and tonight I look at one, that's John Knox, to actually bring us that privilege. As they began to expound the word of God, they read in this word that no king is above the law and they said to the king, "You are as much under this word as I am, and if you don't behave and if you don't listen to this law, you're no more king." You see, that was new and what we today have in these liberties come directly from the Reformation and from the revival of the teachings of God's word.

So again we must thank God for the works of Luther and Calvin. And so what are some of the other blessings we enjoy today as the fruit of the labor? Well, I know you probably don't like going to school. That's, of course, only when you're young, because when you're older, not all young people don't like school, most of them like learning actually, but learning is such a tremendous blessing. You know, no kid and no young person learned to read, learned to write, learned to think for himself, learned to think beyond the little village square he grew up in because there were no schools. Luther, Calvin, John Knox are three that come to my mind at this moment, all were men who emphasized the importance of the school. John Knox, well, John Knox said, "We need to have a school in every village of this country in Scotland if you want to raise Scotland to a level of industry and diligence and prosperity." And he did, indeed, nearly manage to do that.

So kids, you like to read? I look at all of you boys here in the front and I wonder how many of you are saying yes inside, but you're not going to say that because it's not cool, right? But do you like to read? That's a new world that opens up to you. Or you know what, before the Reformation no kid learned to read except if you were a clergyman, and if you were a clergyman you learned how to write and how to read and today the word "clergy" is still in our English language. What word? That's the guy and a man who on the board is to do the writing. He's called a clerk. That comes from the Old English "clergy" because they were the only people that could write.

So that's a blessing. In some of our students here are learning or having a Bachelor's degree in liberal arts and I used to think liberal arts is a bad, that's a bad course because it talks about liberal. What does the word "liberal" mean? It comes from the Latin word "liberty." So the curriculum was designed to teach these young people to think and that brought liberty. It would not be there under the bondage of ignorance. It would not be under the bondage of lies being told to them and they couldn't check it out because the book wasn't there or any other book was there. So please be thankful for schooling that is giving us so much liberty and dignity and prosperity.

How about social justice? You know, it was after the Protestant Reformation that men began to raise up their voice about fairness and justice and law and protection by the law and accountability of those who ruled and those who were employed. That was not there, friends, before the Reformation. If you were working and you broke your leg, well, too bad. You go home and you try to find somebody else to do the work for you but I'm not going to pay for you. You don't work, you don't get paid. So you think of the terrible suffering that families went through when their father got sick or the father broke their leg and couldn't work. Well, sorry, you're going to have to eat the tree roots because I don't take care of you. It's the Reformation that brought his social awareness. We need to take care of the poor, take care of the broken, the wounded, and today we have all these wonderful provisions of ACC and so on. Where does it actually come from? From the Reformation time when the word of God again revived and it brought a Western change in thinking in our society that we're profiting from today.

So you throw those things back to those people who make it sound like that we are the problem in this world. One more example. Great organizations which still are helping out today in the world were all devoted, all founded by devoted Christians. The Red Cross is founded by who? Henry Dunant. He's a Genevan preacher, evangelist preacher. He's the one who founded the Red Cross out of a sense of compassion. Of course, we all know the Salvation Army and does a lot of social good, founded by a Christian man, Minister William Booth. I don't know if there are any Barnardo Homes in New Zealand. Who ever heard of the Barnardo Homes? Today are completely flawed philosophy of orphanages, the Barnardo Organization is completely unchristian today, but the original Barnardo Homes was the largest organization of orphanages in Europe, founded by a Christian woman. Someone like George Mueller. And it came, again, because of the Reformation. Prison reforms in various nations was only carried on by Christians, not by non-Christians. Labor reform that we have today. We have child labor laws. We have laws protecting women, working in mines. We have established mental health institutions. Do you know what they did with the handicapped before the Reformation? You stick them in a room and you lock the door and you throw the food across and hopefully somehow they'll get to eat. Completely beastly. It was through the revival of the word of God that people began to see, "Do you know what? These are people. Yes, they are limited, they need love and care." And today we still do that. We still have mental institutions.

So then, friends, if we hear these assaults against Christianity, tell these people, "Okay, stop for a moment. If you want to get rid of Christianity, do you want to get rid of the Red Cross? You want to get rid of the Salvation Army? Do you want to get rid of mental

institutions? Do you want to get rid of ACC? No? Well, thank God then for having brought that into your life. Really indirectly we are the Reformation, those Christians." So we need to give it back to these people and make them realize it is by the grace of God that today we are living in a Western society. Now I will go to China again in the coming weeks, none of that exists. You're poor, too bad. If you break your leg, too bad. If you don't have money, too bad. If you get retired, too bad. You better have your kids taking care of you. Even if you work all your life, too bad. That's a Communist unchristian nation.

So again, only bring these things to mind for a moment. To conclude, then, as I have sketched before you that the Reformation has really brought such incredible change in our Western society that it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the revival of Christianity. One church historian called the Reformation not a revival, he called it a new creation and I kind of like that. It's something new that the holy God created through the preaching of his word and changed the society completely, not only in the spiritual bondage but in every other aspect.

So to sum it up this evening, this Reformation gift has shaped our Western culture and our Western society far more than the revival of God's truth. It is influencing the arts, the literature, the science, the law, the politics, even economics. Calvin had a lot to say on economics and even today, therefore, we must reject those people who claim that Christianity is the problem for the progress in society. They do not know. I call those people historical illiterates. They have never studied the history of the world. Now that's always what Satan's aim is, you keep people ignorant of the past and they stay forever a little child. That's one of the reasons why we have an evening like this because we need to know and we need to remember what God has done in our society, in our church.

So let's sing together from the next psalter, a selection that is psalter #393, and really tied in beautifully with this national prosperity that God brought in and through the Reformation. So there are three verses, let us sing all three.

"O happy land, whose sons in youth,  
In sturdy strength and noble truth,  
Like plants in vigor spring;  
Whose daughters fair, a queenly race,  
Are like the cornerstones that grace  
The palace of a king.

O happy land, when flock and field  
Their rich, abundant increase yield,  
And blessings multiply;  
When plenty all thy people share,  
And no invading foe is there,  
And no distressful cry.

O happy people, favored land,  
To whom the Lord with liberal hand  
Hath thus His goodness shown;  
Yea, surely is that people blest  
By whom Jehovah is confessed  
To be their God alone."

Now the second focus tonight, I'd like you to think a little while about John Knox. John Knox is a Reformer that God used mightily in the Reformation's covenant and in the past we've looked at ??, we have looked at Zwingli, Calvin, Luther. I thought this evening let's take someone that we don't so often hear about and that's John Knox.

Now the Scripture that tells us to do so is from Hebrews 13:7. I'll read that verse to you once again. It says, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." That's what God says we are to remember them. The Hebrew or the Greek word is we have to recall. Now how many of us know John Knox? How many know anything about him beyond he lived in Scotland? So in order to remember, we need to have some facts so we're going to have to think together and do some research. Well, that's what I did because I didn't know a whole lot about John Knox either, to be honest. So it was very wonderful to actually study this life of this man in the last couple of weeks just to acquaint myself with him and, you know, God says take effort to remember them. Now he has had not to rule over us personally, he has not been our elder or our minister, but he certainly has spoken to us the word of God via via via today we may benefit from men like John Knox.

So that's why God tells us we've got to think of these people for a moment in our mind and we are to think about them and study their life. [unintelligible] I agree with J. C. Ryle, J. C. Ryle says where the world likes to forget certain people in the world's history, the world likes to forget certain parts of history. That's happening. Our history books are rewritten and people don't want to hear about even today, right? People telling me the Holocaust didn't happen. It's hard to believe that only 70 years after World War II people are actually saying that, that never happened. Why? Because keep them ignorant. Let's tuck this away in a forgotten corner. So with people like John Knox and all the Reformation heroes who died often, not John Knox in this case, on the stake.

Now why does God command us to remember them? I think there's two reasons. You boys like heroes, right? Hero stories. I cannot think of any boys here at the moment except the Hardy Boys but they're not here. That was a whole big story hero that I used to read when I was young. And why do we like heroes? Because they never fail. They always win. They're always smart. No, God says, "I want you to remember the heroes." This book is about heroes, the book of Hebrews. The people that God wrote this book to I cannot discourage. They're Christians who are suffering, some of them losing their business, some of them losing their families, their loved ones, or even their own liberties in life. And then God says to this author, "Take the heroes." And if you go back to chapter 11, kids, you read about all the heroes, the heroes of faith: Abraham, Noah,

Moses, Gideon, you read them all. Why do we have to read about those? Because they're inspiring. If you read these life stories of these people and you lay your own life next to it, these people could be great sources of encouragement. They overcame trials by faith. Obviously the greatest hero is the Lord Jesus himself.

Now the second reason that I think we need to look at these heroes, not only for encouragement but for inspiration. Men like John Knox was willing to lay down his life for what the Bible taught and what are believing in our church. How many of us would be willing to give up our life? Children, look for a moment, how many of you would be willing to give your mom, your dad, yourself, your liberty? And there were kids your age who were in prison, banished from mom and dad because they went to the Reformed Church rather than the Roman Catholic Church. Those are my heroes, those kids. They were willing to suffer for what they were taught. You see, those are the real men, those are the real women, those are the real boys, the real girls, and then if I look at myself and we look at ourselves, friends, and we look at these heroes, we think, "Wow, we are very very weak."

John Knox, you know what inspired him to become finally a man to believe the Bible and confess it? He saw his teacher burn on the stake. George Wishart was a teacher, mentor, that taught John Knox about Luther's teachings on the Bible. Finally George Wishart was caught by Cardinal Beaton and he was taken to St. Andrews and he was burnt in the village, and when John Knox wanted to burn with him, he said to George Wishart, "I'll join you." He said, "No, no, John, you will not join me unless you're caught, but you don't join me." And he sees his master burn up on the fire and he says, "Then I today will choose to walk in what he has taught me from the Scriptures." Imagine you see your friend burning to death because of what he believes. You might think, "I better hide my feelings and my convictions because I might be next."

You see, that's John Knox and hundreds and thousands, friends, of men and women just like you and me indeed make those confessions and those choices. That's why men like John Knox tonight is to be set before us. Remember them that rule over you, spoke the word of God who faith follow. Maybe this is an evening in which God is going to appeal to you who are here wavering. You have not come to a full surrender. You are halting between two opinions. You know, read church history maybe it may be God's means to help you indeed to take a new direction as a model of inspiration, as a source of exhortation. Yeah, think about John Knox tonight, let the prayer be in your heart, "Lord, make me like that man." Not in everything. Not in everything. John Knox has his strange things and he was the child of his days and he had done things that were not right but he certainly knew the grace of God and has lived it out in a tremendous love and zeal for God's service.

So God says, listen to this text again, remember them that you may follow their faith. We mustn't idolize these men. We must never put them on a pedestal. There might not even be a pedestal for John Knox [unintelligible]. We don't know if there is but John Knox would disagree. He would say, "Chuck me off that pedestal. I don't belong there." Today John Knox's burial place is actually in the parking lot in St. Andrews. That's where he is.

This great man of God is a forgotten man in Scotland and I would not be surprised if you walk into St. Andrews today and you ask the people there, "Say, do you know who is John Knox?" They'd say, "I've never heard of him." I met a man of Dundee a couple of years ago in an airport in the States, Dundee, Scotland. What names come to your mind when you hear Dundee, Scotland? [unintelligible] Scottish background. M'Cheyne, 150 years ago or so. Great preacher, M'Cheyne. I met this man in Dundee and I said, "Do you know M'Cheyne?" Never heard of him. I said, "Do you know the St. Peters Church in Dundee?" He says, "Never seen the thing." I said, "You've gotta be kidding? You've never heard of this man? He was one of the greatest preachers in your town that God used to revive the church there and you don't even know." He said, "No." "Were you born in Dundee?" He said, "Yes, my grandfather was born there and so was I." That shows you, friends, how quickly things can go from good to very low, and may God forbid that to happen in our midst, and that's why an evening like this is good.

So no idolizing of great men of faith. We are to follow their faith, their faithfulness, their steadfastness. You know, these men, they suffered and died on the stake and rotted away in dungeons because they refused to compromise one stitch on the word of God and the teachings of Jesus, and so when we are to recall men like that, we are to press their footsteps and we need to ask ourselves, "Am I living like that?"

I'll read you this quote from John Owen. He says, "Recall to their mind their instruction. Continue in the profession and the practice of the teachings that they taught. Meditate upon their lives and as far as their works corresponded to their words, imitate their conduct. Copy their virtues, not their strangeties. No mere men, not the best of men is to be our pattern or our example absolutely. That honor is due to Christ alone. Yet remember them which spoke before." So let's take John Knox out for a moment in our evening meditation here. God expects us to keep inside the end of their conversation, that is, their lifestyle. That's their course of life.

Who is John Knox? Well, he was born about 22 years before, sorry, after Luther was born so he's a little bit after Luther. And John Knox grew up in Scotland and he was a very bright boy. He had an excellent tongue, kids, he was a good speaker and a debater already when he was in grade school. He was really really awesome. Now I think the Lord was getting him ready to be a preacher many years later. He grew up in the Roman Catholic Church and because he was such a bright student, John Knox became a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. 25 years of age, he was finished with his education and he became a priest and so he became part of the Roman Catholic Church for many years, about 13 years long. We don't know much about that period of his life but we know one thing, John Knox began to read this book for the first time after he became a priest. Strange thing to become a church official and he had never read the Bible. That's how it went in those days because keeping them ignorant of the Bible, that's good for priests too because then you can't teach the people either.

So John Knox was for 13 years a priest and he began to read the works of Augustine. Now young people, you are going to university, may I recommend a book to you tonight? "The Confessions of Augustine." Have you ever read it? Excellent book. Bright mind,

thinking mind, actually wrestles out with the very issues of the doctrines of grace. Wonderful book to read. Classic. Should be on the shelf of every university student that is here or not here. But you don't have to only be a university student, let me quickly add that to that, to read that book, "The Confessions of Augustine."

Anyway they were blessed to John Knox and so after 13 years, he openly professed himself to be a Protestant preacher but how did that exactly happen we do not know. He doesn't tell us whether he has struggled like Luther struggled for all these years, we don't know. We don't know much about Calvin's conversion. We don't know much about John Knox's conversion. Maybe he struggled a lot, kids. Maybe he had a lot of struggling to do to try to understand and get away from the thinking that he was brought up in.

But he saw in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland enormous abuse. Did you know that the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland owned more than half of all the real estate of Scotland before the Reformation? I mean, they're supposed to be poor servants of Christ. They owned more than half of all Scotland in terms of real estate, farms, buildings, everything. Their annual income was 18 times the income of the government of Scotland and the government had to pay the army and all the other things. 18 times more. They just sucked the money out of the people with all their corruption.

They had terrible immoral lives. The Archbishop of St. Andrews who killed and burned to death John Knox's teacher, he lived openly with a concubine. He had 10 kids. That's the leader of the Roman Catholic Church and that's what John Knox began to see. There something is not adding up here. Why can we do this?

And so doubtless he struggled a lot with all these experiences and finally when he hits 42 years old, he is asked to become the preacher in St. Andrews castle. I've taken a lot of big steps, of course, through his life because it's a lot of time, but you know, they asked him, "John Knox, will you become our preacher?" And it says, this biographer says he began to weep, kids. He began to weep and he says, "I want to think about it." And for a couple of days he disappeared into his bedroom in one of the chambers of the castle, and after a couple of days he comes out and you could see in his face this man has not slept for several days. He wept, cried and wrestled before the Lord and he said, "Yes, I will." And they said, "Why was it so hard to say that? Why was it so hard to say that?" He loved to talk and to preach. Because John Knox knew, "When I say yes, there is no turning back and I will become a persecuted man the rest of my life and I may die like George Wishart," his teacher. And here you have, again, one of these heroes. If they would ask, if you would ask me let's say 12 years ago, you would have called me and said, "Pastor, do you want to become our preacher?" And I knew that if I would come to New Zealand, I might end up in prison, I might end up at the stake, I would be haunted and persecuted the rest of my life, my family would not be safe, my kids would not be safe. Do you see? This is what this man was asked and he said, "Yes, I will." But not without struggling and that shows you again that he has been a man like we all are.

So anyway, after he has accepted this office, of course, knowing what the eventual cost will be, he preaches his first sermon a week later in the St. Andrews Church and that was



the declaration of the spiritual battle. What John Knox said there can be debated today as being entirely true but he said the Roman Catholic Church is the Antichrist. Whether he was completely right about that or not, we'll leave that on the side. That there were antichristian elements in that Church, yes, that was absolutely true. Whether it's the Antichrist time will tell. But that's the first one on the Scottish soil who said that openly. George Wishart, his father, his spiritual father said there are bad things happening in the Church. It needs to be reformed. It needs to change. But John Knox spoke, he says the roots of this Church is antichristian.

Now when they hear that, obviously war breaks loose from the Roman Catholic Church and from the Scottish government, and so the French people come on ships to St. Andrews and besiege the castle where he is and that, indeed, ended with John Knox becoming a prisoner. He is taken prisoner and he becomes, he's tied to a deck on a ship and he has to row for the next 19 months over the oceans on a warship. He's 42 years old, this man at that time. They say that after that he never had the same health again. He was an unhealthy man. His health was broken.

So he spent for about two years on a ship as a slave of the French nation and yet he shares later with us that those two years were the best years of his life. He says, "I had a lot of zeal and a lot of knowledge but I needed experience. I needed to be strengthened in my character by suffering." And he says, "The one thing I really needed, I needed to know what my human heart was like, and if there's one thing I learned on the slave galley what human nature is like." I can ask John Knox what he meant of that statement but I can just about imagine. I think he was angry. I think he felt a lot of anger sometimes against God for allowing this to happen. Here he was doing good, giving himself for the cause and here he is stuck on a ship. He says, "I've gotten to know my own heart." Maybe he got to know the hearts of the other prisoners as they were cursing maybe and all the bad things. He said, "Wow, how evil we are." And so he reflects on these two years as very positive even though it was very difficult.

So the hand that God used to bring liberty to Scotland was for two years a prisoner of war and he says this: it taught him self-control, patience, meekness, endurance of wrong, calmness, steadiness, resolute resistance to the opposition of darkness and falsehood. Finally he's freed and I'll go quick now. He gets a couple of years to live in England but finally eight years later after he was plucked out of St. Andrews, put on the ship, he comes back to Scotland and people are looking for him and waiting for him. Very short visit and his teaching has enormous results in Scotland. He has preached for several months but before the persecution bursts loose, he feels it's time for him to go back to Geneva. So he goes back to Geneva. Now who lives in Geneva? Calvin, very good. So he gets to know Calvin, gets taught by Calvin, gets more instruction by Calvin and it has left him, great blessings on him.

So he has sown a seed, he has now a little organization in the Church of Scotland, and in those years that he's in Geneva, another woman arrived in Scotland and maybe you kids will know from your history studies. She's called Queen Mary of Scotland. She's not a good woman. She's not a good queen. She immediately urged the Parliament to forbid

any person preaching, and that was accepted. Only the Roman Catholic Church was allowed to give people the permission to preach. If you don't, you go in prison.

So that's helpful. When you have no preachers, you cannot teach the people what the word of God says, and while she is plotting to get France and Spain involved, and I leave all those details out, there's a little boat leaving a German town and onboard of that little boat is one Scotsman. She didn't know he was coming. Nobody knew he was coming, but John Knox felt it was the time by God pointed to him to return back to Scotland and it is said and I'll quote it to you, "That Scotsman who himself was greater than an army of 10,000 men." Not because John Knox was a great, strong, physical man but he was a man of incredible prayer. Queen Mary has said she was more afraid of John Knox's prayers than she was of 10,000 soldiers. That was his strength. He besought heaven and heaven answered him like an Elijah of old, like a Jeremiah of old.

So without announcement on May 2, 1559, John Knox arrives on Scottish soil and is immediately brought to Edinburgh to the government and Queen Mary, and you know they are struck dumb, it says in the book, for half an hour. Nobody knows what to say. They sit there looking at each other. "Oh no." It's amazing, just the one name of John Knox made them fear and brought confusion.

A few days later, Queen Mary declared John Knox an outlaw. What will that mean, kids, an outlaw? If you're an outlaw, that means you're standing outside the law so anybody who kills you doesn't get in trouble. So now he has no protection. He has to be protected by God and by friends that God may use. And she sends this whole message over, "Scotland, John Knox is an outlaw." You know, sometimes Satan is a little dumb because now all Scotland knows John Knox is back and they just love it. He gets invitations from all over the place to preach. You know, back in those days when you had no email and no newspaper, Queen Mary really helped John Knox. She didn't realize it but now he gets to preach everywhere and he goes around and around and for many years he is preaching the word of God.

He gets invited to St. Andrews again, the place where he began, and the church elders invite him to preach and the result is that the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church says, "We'll hire a whole bunch of people to sit in church to kill him if he gets in the pulpit." I was thinking of that when I read that. Now if you invite me to preach on Sunday and I get a message that spies are going to come into the congregation and if I get to preach here, they'll kill me as I preach, would I come? You see, the consistory of St. Andrews Church begins to talk to John Knox and say, "Do you know what? We're canceling his appointment. You're not preaching." John Knox says, "Oh, no, no, no. I am going to preach." He says, "When a couple of years ago I was laying on the deck of that ship chained to the deck, all I could do, I could look up and I could see the roof of the St. Andrews Church and God said in my heart, 'You will preach in that church again.'" He says, "And I'm going to preach tomorrow." And they couldn't stop him.

So when he preaches, the church is chock full with noblemen, all kinds of townspeople, hundreds of people are in that big church and it was a huge church, and he begins to

preach and nothing happens except the word of God begins to lay hard on the people's hearts. There he preaches about Jesus cleansing the temple and from that point on he just goes and he preaches about the necessity of the church to be cleansed and he calls the people up to unanimously resolve to have reformed biblical worship set up in St. Andrews and the whole town comes together and they decide to do that, and that's the first Reformed, today they are called Presbyterian church service in St. Andrews and soon all over Scotland little church services like that are beginning.

So to make it a bit short here, the end of his life has come eventually and it says in our text words tonight consider the end of the conversation. That means the going out of life, the exit. That man John Knox comes to the end of his life, his last appearance is on November 9, 1572 that he preaches, and at the close of the service it's like his last time. He knew it, I think. He spoke like Samuel. He says, "I appeal to you in the presence of God to whom I expect soon to give an account that I have walked among you with a good conscience, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in all sincerity." And he gets off the pulpit, he looks really tired. They bring him across the street to the house you can still go and visit in Edinburgh today, the house where John Knox lived, and he never leaves that place again. As he lived, so he died, full of courage. No fear in his heart. He knew he could die and that's what the word says, he says, "Follow their faith considering the end of their conversation," that means the exit out of life.

As he's laying on his deathbed, he's asking his wife to read the sermons of John Calvin on Ephesians. How many of us have read those, I think in the back of library, our church library? Now that was the food for his soul and that's the last day for his life. He'd get one indication what God used in his life, he said to his wife, he said, "Would you please read John 17 for that's the chapter God used to anchor my soul by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."

So when he dies he's a praying man. One of his last prayers we should make ours. He says, "Lord, give peace to this afflicted country, raise up faithful pastors." I'm going to ask you to remember tonight to pray that. Raise up faithful pastors. I look at this whole row of young men here sitting in front of us, make it your prayer tonight, boys and other boys, fathers in the audience, faithful pastors. Never say, "Oh no, no, I can't speak." You heard that Sunday night. Don't say, "No, I don't want to." Ask, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" We need faithful pastors like John Knox today so let's begin to ask for it.

Finally as he comes to his last, he sighs deeply and he says, "Now it is come." I've been thinking about these last words. He didn't say now it's over. He says, "Now it is come." He didn't end his life, he began his life when he exited from here to the everlasting home with his Father. Now it's come. You know, friends, here we have a man who comes at the end of his life and he is a hero of faith, isn't he? Today largely forgotten. Not without faults. No, not at all. And you know, if you read and study the life you're from, your eyebrows sometimes, "How could they do that?" But I think you need to keep in mind these people are men of their time. They live in an incredible society with examples that we'd say, "We can't do that." And be fair, acknowledge it indeed, our Reformer sometimes did things that we would not today except as a moral action perhaps or a

reaction. For example, John Know had no problem speaking favorable of armed revolution and he says, "If the Queen can use the sword, we can use the sword and we can do violent things in order to get rid of them." Now that's really not appropriate but, again, that's in the days in which they lived.

So the conclusion. Two things. What stands out to me in this man John Knox is his faith in the word of God. On his funeral, the Earl of Morton said, "Here lies a man who never feared the face of a man." And why not? Because he believed the word of God. Whose faith follow. Secondly, he's a man of prayer. Prayer was his secret strength. That's what made Queen Mary say she was more afraid of John Knox and his prayers than of an army of men. Now that was a wonderful testimony to John Knox.

Thank you for listening. I hope it has been somewhat inspiring again to read and take up your church history books.