

[Speaker 1]

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Good to see you all. I recognize some faces a little known fact. I was actually here. I don't even know how long ago it was and did this event. Uh, when the church was Christ the King. When Eric Sawyer was the pastor? A long time ago, and I I, I've been trying to find out when that was and nobody remembers. So it's sometime in the past. But we had association with you all for at least two decades, maybe more. I know Mark horn was just down here and has been down here.

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Elder training and ordaining Elders, so we pray for you. We, we just appreciate your work here in Springfield, so it's good to be here. What I want to do? This afternoon is. This, and I'm going to list for you what I'm going to talk about. And then we'll talk about it. I want to talk about why church history, uh, Ewing already did a little bit of that, say a little bit more, and particularly why early church history, and and I'm going to focus on early church history almost entirely in the next two talks. Let's talk about six gifts that the church the early church has given to us and also some problems.

[Speaker 1]

Scripture. Early Church in the expansion of the church in the first 400 years. The early church as the foundation for the social order in the west that we enjoy. The early church is worship liturgy and sacraments. The people in the early church. Um, and overcoming the challenge of Greek philosophy in the early church, then lastly, just some problems. In the church, that's that's now. The next talk, we'll deal with doctrines, particularly heresies. That the early church had to deal with their foundational for us. So, why should we care about history? Who cares? I I. Since I'm a boomer, I have my radio station set on the 60s and 70s music in my car. And interestingly enough, the last two weeks, I keep hearing this song by Sam Cook in 1960.

[Speaker 1]

Don't know much about his theory, you know. Some don't know much biology. Don't know much about the French I took. Now you know how it goes, but I do know that I love you all that, but that's kind of a theme for a lot of people, you know, who cares about history and a lot of the problem is that, uh, the way history is caught in our schools? In our it's, it's taught in textbooks.

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Committees who can, who are mainly concerned with their commercial success. And so, it's just very boring, and there's not a lot of pedagogical Effectiveness in that way of teaching history. So, you know, Cicero's? Famous statement. About 50 years before the birth of Christ. Of the Roman poet and philosopher Cicero. Those who know nothing of the past are like children living in the present. And Psalm 78, which I want to read to you, just for a moment or Psalm 78. Is sometimes called the Christian education Psalm. And here's how it begins. Give ear, oh my people! To my teaching, incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

[Speaker 1]

I will open my mouth in a parable or in a dark saying the Hebrew word. There is

mashal a riddle. I will open my mouth with a riddle. I will utter dark sayings from of old things that we have heard and know that our fathers have told us we will not hide them from their children, but tell them to the coming generation, the Glorious Deeds of Yahweh, and as my the Wonders that he has done.

[Speaker 1]

That God has done that. It also has a riddle-like character to it. It's not always easy to draw out from a historical events, historical personalities, historical records and documents, and Creeds and confessions. It's not always easy to draw out from that. Exactly what the takeaway is for us as moderns it and it. For that reason, it's kind of fascinating, at least to me, especially if you like riddles, because a lot of it is like solving a riddle. Why church history it is? It is really a safeguard against modern arrogance and provincialism. We think we've arrived. We think we know all the answers. We think that everything ends with us in American culture. Well, it's not going to end. We've got thousands of years yet, and we're just really snobbish if we think that we're at the end of history. And we're also snobbish if we think that earlier Christians.

[Speaker 1]

Way. C.s Lewis, one one said in his book on the reading of old books. Every age has its own Outlook. It's especially good at seeing certain truths and especially liable to making certain mistakes every age. Is to keep the clean Breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds. A clean Breeze of the centuries, blowing through our minds. Gk Chesman once said it ought to be the oldest things that are taught to the youngest people. It's very easy for us to get trapped in our own little theological and ecclesiastical bubbles. One of the one of the best experiences I had after being in the Pressford church and going to pressuring seminary is going for my graduate work at Concordia Theological Summary, which is a Lutheran Seminary.

[Speaker 1]

Just having to hear everything presented from a Lutheran perspective. Certainly, I wasn't going to agree with everything, but it also made me kind of look back at my own Traditions. And often. In a with a critical eye. Um, and so it's always helpful. And church history has its function. You go back, and you read through middle Through The Eyes of Middle Ages, the eyes of medieval theologians or churchmen, and you're, like, wow, I never thought about it that way. Yeah, that's. That's the point is the whole point church history has a way of basing us and helping us not to absolutize our own Traditions. Okay.

[Speaker 1]

It's also a valuable understanding. Uh, to understand the um. The Bible is very valuable to understand church history. Okay. Jesus says in John 16 to his Apostles, when the spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. And he did that, of course, with the apostles, but he continues to do that in the church, and we ignore the church and the history of the church. We're ignoring the spirit and the spirits were throughout the ages, and that's not a good thing.

[Speaker 1]

Church history is important because at the center of Western Civilization at the center of Western Liberties, we might say the center of our culture that we've

inherited that is rapidly being riddled away. Is the church? The church, the West wouldn't be the West. All you gotta do is look at the East and see that there's a huge difference. Okay. This is our history. This is our identity. Yes, we're Americans, but we are not ultimately Americans. We are our story. Our identity is we are Christians, and we Trace our history, not just back to 1776 or 1789.

[Speaker 1]

All the way back to the early church, and then all the way back to. Isaiah and Noah and Adam. That's our story. That's who we are. Now, that's our family. That's our Ultimate family. It's a white early church history. What is it about early church history? That is important. Now, first of all, notice what I'm going to do and I didn't communicate well with Ewing, and I apologize for that. I'm just going to talk about what is often called the patristic era. From the? Or both, the Greek and the Latin for father. So the early church fathers?

[Speaker 1]

Um, mostly up to 500 A.D. They're sometimes called sub Apostolic because it's not Apostolic anymore, but it's sub-abostolic. I'll talk about major personalities like Ignatius of Antioch. Clement of Rome, polycarp, Uranus, origin, athanasius, the cappadocian fathers, the two Gregories. And basil, tertalian and cyprian and Ambrose, and Jerome and Augustine and hippo and Cyril of Alexandria. And I bet reading that list. You might recognized a few. You might even know something of Augustine because every reform preacher always has an illustrates about Augustine in a sermon, uh, every other sermon, probably, but these are. These are men that you ought to at least.

[Speaker 1]

Reach something about at some point in your life. Now, I'm going to talk about why, and I don't expect you to remember everything I say in all the details that it won't all be on the test. But I want to just give you a sense. Of how important these guys were, how important this time period in church was, and, and if, if it's just, you know, gives you this? Wow, I never thought about this before. I never thought how important this stage was. That's good. Most of these guys are very ordinary men. One of the things you will notice if you start reading in, say the early church fathers.

[Speaker 1]

Of Ignatius, Clement of Rome, polycarp. You will notice the difference between their writings and the writings of the Apostle Paul. By the writings of Peter are the writings of James are Lou or Matthew.

[Speaker 1]

We need to appreciate how intelligent, how skilled and talented the men that Jesus chose were. He did not choose a bunch of dumb illiterate fishermen. Are fishermen, most of them, not all of them. But they were not. They were not dumb. They were not ordinary. They were not just fishermen. They were literate. I mean, the things that the apostles wrote have challenged the best Minds in the history of the world. For 2000 years, there are still more Master's thesis and PhD dissertations being written about the New Testament that anything else is absolutely crazy. But then once you get once all the apostles die and you get the men that follow them.

[Speaker 1]

There's a real difference, and it's not just the inspiration of the spirit. It is that, but it's more than that. Um, that's why. Some folks and one of my mentors, James Jordan, calls the church fathers the church babies. And not to despise them, but they had a lot to learn. We, and as he would say, also, we may still be in the church baby phase in church history. Or maybe? Thousands of years to come. Who knows? So I've got the other thing to notice about the early church is that it is not. Pelican wrote, like six volumes on the history of Doctrine in a church. Really excellent stuff, but in the beginning, he starts off and notes something. He asks the question, how has theology been done?

[Speaker 1]

Periods of church history. Remember, theologizing is just going to the Bible and asking, what does it say? What does it mean? How does it apply? You go to the Bible with questions, and you get answers and you write those answers out, or you speak those answers out. That's theology, okay, that's who who is God? Who is man, what is sin? What's our problem? Where are things going theology? Well, theology is done in the early church almost exclusively by pastors. 500 years. Up until about Gregory the Great? Almost all of theologizing is done by Bishops and pastors, and don't get hung up by the word. Bishop Bishop is just the pastor of a larger.

[Speaker 1]

Like a presiding Minister, but almost all theology is done. But now that, that means theology has a certain character to it. Early church. Now, the transitional figure is Gregor the Great. In the 6th Century, who is both a bishop and a monk and he found? Domestic orders from 500 until the Reformation until the 16th century. Almost all theology is done by. And in monasteries. And as that kind of character to it. All the great medieval theologians, Saint Thomas, Aquinas, Bonaventure, and some, I mean, they're all. Monks okay? And Gregory was the first who was both a bishop and monk in the 16th century. There's a shift again.

[Speaker 1]

And take. Martin Luther was Martin Luther, a monk, yes. What else was he? University Professor, a doctor. So that, and he's also a. Pastor. And so, at the Reformation, you get a return to the Pastoral theology. Calvin's a pastor krammers of Bishop bootsters, a pastor swingley's a pastor. A lot of these guys are pastors, some of them like Luther are University professors, but you have this Resurgence of astral theology in the 16th century Reformation, but shortly it reverts to the university.

[Speaker 1]

Least the 17th century, maybe late 16th century. You have most of theology being done. In Academia by professors, and that gives it a certain character, unfortunately, but so, my point is, you go back to the early church, and you find that you have pastors who I'm not saying they weren't intelligent. I'm not saying they didn't have some academic Craigs and couldn't write. Essays and letters and books that could compare with the best thinkers and Scholars from the day they could, but they had a astral bet to them. And that, should that's important? Um, this is why this is why the early church was so important to the reformers.

[Speaker 1]

Because the reformers kind of kind of pop their opinion, especially in evangelicalism, the reformers didn't just go. Back to the New Testament and say. Yeah, who cares about all that church history. That's just all bad. They indeed had a problem with late medievals. Catholicism. They had a problem with some of the medium pathosis of, but they went back to Augusta and cyprian and athanasius and all these guys. And they found inspiration because they were pastors and had. He had marred the theological Enterprise yet, and so this is important if you look. At Calvin's institutes. At the end of all four books, and you look at the index and you find the the men that he cites. You will find Augustine up all over Augusta and others. Other early church fathers, uh, that's important.

[Speaker 1]

Also. Um, the early church is the nursery or the engine of the Kingdom. Always remember, Jesus came. Preaching the gospel of the Kingdom? And the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed is God's new way of organizing and ordering Humanity under the lordship of Christ. The gospel's, not just how to get to heaven. It is that it's not just how to find a gracious God. It is that, but once you find a gracious God and know for certain that you've trusted in Jesus for the Forgiveness of sins, and you're going to have it, and you're going to be raised on the last day of the new heavy door. Then you're like, what am I supposed to do now?

[Speaker 1]

Now is Kingdom work? And in the early church. What you have is the 11 or the yeast of the Kingdom. As Jesus says in Matthew 13, remember small seed placed into the ground grows up into a big tree or yeast put into, uh, the dough. That's what's going on in the early church? And I'll say something about that in a minute. When I talk a little more about the expansion of maturity, okay? Now, let me talk about the gifts. That have been given to us. Bestowed upon us through the labor of the early church fathers through the patristic fathers.

[Speaker 1]

First of all. The gift of the New Testament scripture? You have a Bible on your lap, although no one does it anymore. You have a Bible in your iPhone. And it didn't fall out of Heaven. Like Joseph Smith's gold tablets, it didn't. It has been passed on to you by the. In the early church, especially, is really important to get this. So, here you have Paul writing a letter to Ephesus. By writing a letter to thessal and items. Appear writing to the dispersion, which is the dispersed Christians from Jerusalem. Because of the persecution you're in, the writing to these guys and they they're writing.

[Speaker 1]

They're writing it out on a Papis or a Vellum or whatever it is, and they're rolling it up and they're giving it to a. Assistant to travel to. That's not like our Ephesus in Rome, unroll it, and have the pastor of the church read it out loud.

[Speaker 1]

Then what? What should you roll it back up and toss it? No, then it's like, whoa, what have we got here? There's a recognition. There's something powerful here. And that's going to take some time to develop. I'll talk about that in a minute, but then they have to copy it. Because then they want to to send Paul charges. Uh, the

man in thessalonica. He makes him take a vow that they will read this to the other brothers. And so. You get Ordinary People. Sitting down at a table and copying? And there are no many rats. There are no xeroxes, there's no PDFs, but there is just Anne written copies.

[Speaker 1]

That is labor intensive. It is going on all around the Roman Empire. And it takes a lot of time. Nope, you ever notice in the New Testament? There is never once any command to read your Bibles every day. Because nobody, even even if that was a reference to the Old Testament, no one had those in their homes. They're in the synagogues. And now they're in the churches, and they're being they're being copied. You went to church and you hear the word of God. You listen to the word of God. Now there's other interesting dimensions of that, but just all this copying and distribution.

[Speaker 1]

Eventually, uh, the recognition. Not the making of, uh, the New Testament, authoritative. But the recognition that certain books are authoritative inspired products of the holy spirit's work in the heart and minds of these authors of Apostles. Others aren't, others may be helpful. Others may be heretical, but that recognition takes hundreds of years. Hundreds of years. That's when the Canon or the rule of what is the New Testament and what is not was established. In fact, it doesn't really get permanently established until like the 370s. An aquanatia sends his Easter. Bishop avanization sends his Easter letter out, and that's the first record we have of all of the New Testament folks being recognized.

[Speaker 1]

Authenticated by the church as inspired writings. It takes a long time. And there's a the early church was very wise in rejecting all the pseudopigrapha pseudopigraphy. You can hear the word pseudo there grapha writings all the false writings. All the writings that were not actually written by the Apostles. You know, there's there's not so much anymore, but occasionally you get this. This surge in interest in pop culture of these other gossipers, like, oh, there's?

[Speaker 1]

There's the gospel of Peter. There's the infancy Gospel of Thomas. The church rightly rejected all of that. The infancy gospel of Thomas has Jesus. Young Jesus making clay birds. And then causing them to turn into birds and fly away. Uh, the gospel of Thomas has a boy bumping into Jesus and Jesus, cursing him so that he dies. There's a teacher who tries to discipline Jesus little Jesus. And Jesus strikes him dead. And then, because people are complaining about what little Jesus is doing to people, he decides he's going to resurrect them all.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah. That stuff. The church recognized that stuff is nonsense. Okay. The other thing that the early church did for us is with regard to scriptures. Is this?

[Speaker 1]

They recognize that if you don't read and think about and theologize. From the holy scriptures in the community in the church. In the assembly, you're going to go

wrong. So that these other little communities that become cultish? That aren't connected with the main trunk line of the church. Whether it's an Ephesus or Rome or Antioch, they they skewed and misunderstood the scriptures. That's like Calvin in the beginning of book four in his institutes, which is about the church. Which is one of the larger books in his institutes. He quotes Cyprian. Cyprian of Carthage? Dies in 250s, so he's in the third Century.

[Speaker 1]

Uh, he called Cyprian very famous, saying that Cyprian, and Augustine repeated it and all the church fathers in the medieval time repeated it, and that is. Cannot have God as your father. If you do not have the church as your mother? The church is a mother. The church as a mother teaches us about Jesus and how to live that. God ordinarily begets and nourishes believers through the church and separation from the church is spiritually perilous. And you read and interpret the scriptures outside of the Christian Community. And you end up getting heretical conclusions. We'll talk about some of those conclusions, the next talk.

[Speaker 1]

So, that's the first thing. You haven't gifted your Bibles by the moving of the spirit and the early church fathers. Who? What about copying and distributing? The scriptures in a quiet, ordinary kind of way. Um, and there's there's not yet a lot of record about how they did it. They just did it. Number two. The post-apostolic church is the age of the church's expansion and growth. So by AD 350. Okay, we're almost 300 years out from the destruction of Jerusalem and the death of the Apostles by AD 350. Upwards of 50 percent of the Roman Empire's population is Christian.

[Speaker 1]

That's 40 to 60 million people. That's a lot. That's huge. Tertullian. Dies, like in the early part of the 200s, the third Century says. In his age about about 200. Set one tenth of Carthage, North Africa was Christian, and among them are included centers, noblemen, women, even relatives of the Roman Pro Consul of Africa. Says, and I quote we are a people of yesterday. And yet, we fill every place belonging to. We fill every place belonging to you. He's speaking to the Roman, uh, unbelievers of Roman pagans, cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very Camp, your tribes, your companies, your Palace, your Senate, your Forum.

[Speaker 1]

Temples only. We can count your armies. Our numbers in a single province will be greater. Chrysostom, about a hundred years later, says that the Christian population in Antioch of his day was a hundred thousand, which would be half of the population of the city. So, in the early church, things are happening. One of my favorites is. Affenacious book! On the Incarnation. Which you should read sometime. It's not very long. It's uh, written at the beginning of the fourth Century, like 320. And what he it's an apology. If you win an apology, it's a defense of the deity of Christ and one of his defenses of the deity of Christ and the reality of Jesus is. God is what has happened in the Roman Empire since Jesus died. Rose again, poured out his spirit and sent out his Apostles and the churches spread.

[Speaker 1]

An amazing statement. Where he talks about. Uh, look around you. Romans look around

you pagans. All the oracles? No longer function. Remember what an oracle is in the Pagan world, and oracle is attached to a temple. And oracle is where everybody goes to find it's. It's like the astrologers of the ancient world, and yet they could go there. And there is usually a civil as one of the greatest example, but there's usually somebody there, maybe some woman prophetess, and you went there. And you said, should I date so, and so is she gonna go out with me, or should I have a business partner with so, and so?

[Speaker 1]

This trip on the ocean up around, you know, Spain, to do Commerce? Should I do these things and you would get answers? And what? What what athanasia says is? The demons that were inhabiting all those oracles they fled. They're gone. Remember what Paul says in First Corinthians 10 that the idols of the pagans worship are demons? Demons control the whole Gentile world before. The church, and as the church spread, the demons fled no more oracles. Their temples are empty, they're ineffective, they're impotent, they're worthless. Now, the church is flourishing that happens in the first 300 years or less.

[Speaker 1]

Of the early Church's history. Thirdly. Uh, scriptures. You have scriptures. We got the church's expansion of growth. Uh, I'll put it this way because this is the way, uh, RJ Rush Dooney put it in his book the foundations of social order, which I recommend to you. It is a study of the early church. Additional role in Western Civilization, especially Western Liberties. So, what you have is a Triumph, not just over the demons in the Roman Empire, but over Imperial Pagan Rome. And what the church does in wherever it is is. I hope we put this like cultivating an alternate polis, an alternate City, an alternate social order which then comes to influence, and in some cases, replace the whole Pagan Roman system. Jesus is the true Lord, Kaiser curios, Lord Jesus.

[Speaker 1]

Uh, I just I didn't do that, right? Kaiser Christos is what I meant to say, Lord Lord Christ, not Kaiser Caesar, not Lord Caesar. You? You have this persecution going on. In the early church, it's kind of periodic. It's not all the time. It depends on the emperor. It depends on the region, but you have lots of Christians who are dying. Martyred because they will not offer incense to. The emperor or to the emperor's image because the emperor is not Lord Jesus is Lord. You have to retullion around here 200, saying that the seed, the seed of the church, is the blood of Christians.

[Speaker 1]

In fact, he didn't say seated church. He just said the seed, and you could say the seed of the Kingdom, the seed of the world. Christians die for their faith. Then you were defanging Roman Imperial power. So, against the demonization of the state. You have Christians saying no, no, Jesus is Lord, not Caesar, not Ronnie okay, and so, what happens is, we'll talk about this a little next time. Is all of these? We read all these creasing confessions, the nice in Creed, the constantinopolitan Creed, creative efs is the calcium. We read all these early church confessions and Creeds as if they're just dealing with ecclesiastical issues, and they are not.

[Speaker 1]

The emperor did not want the church to confess Jesus was God. And God man, because once they did, it means he is not a god, man. He is not the. The the point of, uh, between the point of transition between the Divine and the human Jesus is. It was. It's always a political thing, never less than that. Always more than that, but never less than that. So. So, what we do is we not only undermine in the Roman World? Demonic influence. And the influence of pagan religions and rituals and all that we are undermining the political foundations.

[Speaker 1]

We're not just adjusting, and we're undermining that we're reshaping. The church was reshaping law and Authority, and what it meant to be a person, and ultimately, the whole Western social order. Rushed in, he says, is the Council of nicaea, 325, was not concerned with metaphysical subtleties. But with the very foundations of society, the question was whether Christ was truly God, and if he were not, then the state could claim ultimate Authority. But if he were, then the state was limited and under God.

[Speaker 1]

Decisive break with classical. Cultures, statism. And the sacred Empire. Always be careful even in America, even in American politics. You start having people talk about our constitution or our political institutions being sacred. Watch out! That's, that's a little bit dangerous. You're getting into the wrong kind of territory. Okay, all right, next number four worship and sacraments, uh, the, uh? Um. Old, um, what's his? What's his first name? He was Oliphant old, wrote a book called the ventristic Roots of reformation reformed worship. And it is a great book. I think it's dissertation in in South Africa. I'm not sure.

[Speaker 1]

That all the reformers went back to the early church to find inspiration for reforming all of the distortions in the late medieval Catholic church. We don't know a whole lot about the first 150 years of worship. And if you think about it, this makes sense. So, you have a church that's persecuted. You have a church that's growing. You have a church? Doesn't have all you've got Ordinary people in this church. You have no real institutions outside what's happening in church. You also remember when the early church Christians worship until Constantine reformed the law? No Christian could ever take what we would call the Lord's Day Off.

[Speaker 1]

Unless you owned a business. And everybody else had to work. So you met in the morning early morning and you went to work and you met in the evening after work. That kind of schedule, which I I I throw that out to you just to say what's going on in the early church. They don't have a lot time to write things out. Plus, they're they're copying the scriptures, so we don't have written liturgies up until 225 A.D. Is Apostolic Constitution? And even that his written liturgy. We're not even sure whether that was what they used in Rome or not, so there's not a whole lot there. But there's some Basics.

[Speaker 1]

For example, one of the earliest examples we have was called the did arcade, which

just means teaching in Greek. And it's, that's ad100, so that's very soon after the apostles die, and it's written in Palestine and in Syria, particularly Antioch. And here's what it says. A day of assembly early morning, late night. There are church officers. There are Bishops and deacons. There's a baptismal formula which is from Matthew 28, which is trinitarian. In the name of the father and of the son and the Holy. There's Eucharist, remember? Eucharist just means Thanksgiving, and that's practice when the congregation meets and their prayers are mostly about Thanksgiving, and not are they all all about Thanksgiving? Not about changing the Bread and Wine into something else. Okay?

[Speaker 1]

Up. There's a prayer. We thank you, Our Father, for the Holy Vine of David, your servant. So, uh, over the bread, there's a second prayer. We thank you, our father, for the life and knowledge which you make known to us, and so on. So? And, and what the reformers recognized is, is there was a kind of Simplicity? Not overly simplistic. That there's a kind of Simplicity to the early church worship. Which allow Ordinary people to participate. And this is one of the great things that the reformers did is restored. Congregational participation Luther's priesthood of all believers means that every body participates in so.

[Speaker 1]

Number five. There's an Apostolic succession of life and Doctrine. Minister and minister Church, the church, ordinary faithful Believers. Most of these guys are unknown. Yeah, we've got the big names. But sometimes we do history by big names and forget all the people that populated the Christian church all across the Empire. Okay? And also these people. That populated the church that remembers of the church were despised by the culture Elites in Rome and in other places. Okay, one of the books we have? Uh, well, we actually don't have this book, but we have most of it.

[Speaker 1]

Uh, quoted by origin, the church father, origin origin of caesarea in the third Century, and origin, uh, quotes Celsius. And who writes about Christians. And here's what he said. The teachers of this new Divine word Christians. Seek to make converts of only foolish and low individuals and persons devoid of perception and slaves and women and children. And like all quacks, they gather a crowd of slaves and children and women and idlers. And they speak, and I speak bitterly about this selfie says, because I feel bitter. The Christians say, come to us, you are sinners. You are fools or children you who are miserable, and you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

[Speaker 1]

Rogue, the thief, the burglar, the poisoner, the spoiler of temples and twos. These are their proselytes. We see indeed in private houses, workers of wool and leather, and Fullers and persons of the most uninstructed and rustic character. They seek to instruct the world about Divine things and certain ignorant women is ignorant themselves. They pour forth wonderful statements. Christians teach people that they must leave their father and their instructions and go with the play fellows to the apartments or to the letter shop or to the Fuller shop so they can make attain maturity. And by these words, they win people over origin destroys Celsius. It's one of the coolest.

[Speaker 1]

Against Celsius, you can read it in translation. It's going to, it reveals what's going on in the early church between the elitist academics, philosophers, Scholars. Government, government officials, and the ordinary Christians who. Flocking to the church in numbers that just make the authorities mad as Hatters. Yeah. All right, number six, um, so there's lots of lots of people here that are number five, with lots of people here that are passing on. The truth, the word of God, the scriptures. The way to worship the way to live their ordinary People. That's a great deal. Number six, the challenge of Greek philosophy okay, the science of the day.

[Speaker 1]

Was Greek philosophy? Tertullian. Famously asked, what does Jerusalem have to do with Athens? And in the next talk, I'm going to point out some of the differences. Uh, and some of the ways that the early church was challenged by Greek philosophy, particularly with their conception of God and Jesus. There's another thing about Greek philosophy too. Some of you know, there's Greek philosophers belittled the body. And the material world. And the body and the material world. It's Mucky, it's yucky. It's, it's so far, down the chain of being, you know, God is all the way up there. And there's a chain of being, and at the very bottom, is this?

[Speaker 1]

Mucky world. We live in, okay? And because of that, you have this tendency. Even in the early church. Unfortunately, here's where there's somewhat babies I would say toward asceticism. An example of this. I just mentioned origin how great he was. Origin, by the way, was one of the most accomplished Scholars in the history of the church. He had some issues. But. And one of those issues was. While he was living in Alexandria, his father, who is the head of the catechetical instruction in Alexander in the Alexandrian Church, Alexandria, Egypt, his father was captured. And was going to be executed because he was a Christian.

[Speaker 1]

And origin was young at the time he's in his teens. And he wrote, he wrote his father and said this, be careful not to change your mind because of us. Mom and me don't do that. Remain firm. Oregon's father was killed. His, and when he was killed when he was executed, origin attempted to go out. Into the streets and Proclaim Jesus and his mother had to restrain him. Now! That's all great. It's amazing. But origin also believed that somehow. The Flesh. The material flesh was the problem, and so he self-castrated. He castrated himself in order that he might not have any Temptations of the flesh.

[Speaker 1]

Now, later on, I will say this. He did repent of that, and he never recommended it to anybody else. But this is just an example of kind of the asceticism, meaning, you know. That the origin of sin and sinful desires is always in our bodies in our material being. That's not what the scriptures say. Okay. In fact, Paul warns against this at the end of Colossians 2. He says that that kind of behavior has the appearance of wisdom. Promoting self-made kind of religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but he says that kind of stuff is of no value.

[Speaker 1]

In stopping the Indulgence of the flesh. I do wish that some of our brothers who practiced some severe forms of Lenten fasting would recognize this. You can, you can fast from chocolates all you want, but that's not necessarily a spiritual discipline that's going to help you actually combat the real. To the flesh. I just drove that out there. No extra charge.

[Speaker 1]

But you have this going on here. So even athanasius, as great as he is on the deity of Christ, writes a book about Saint Anthony, the desert father. You have all these desert fathers going out and living in caves. Denying themselves basic necessities or sitting on poles, you heard pole sitters in the early church. They will go out and sit on a pole. And somebody will have to, you know? Uh, ferry up to them sustenance and water. But the idea was, oh, what a spiritual man this guy is. He's given up all this now in. In some ways, I get this because what these guys were often doing is trying to give witness and testimony.

[Speaker 1]

The decadence of their culture of Roman culture. Okay. That's partly their motivation. I'll give them that. But. Asceticism. Comes about because? Of an over familiarity with Greek philosophy.

[Speaker 1]

Almost done here.

[Speaker 1]

There are other problems that are going on here. You have a lot of Martyrs. And these Martyrs end up getting shrines. And not so much worshiped. But lots of things go on in these martyr shrines is sometimes called The Cult of the Saints. Not that it's a cult like we think of it, but it's uh rituals that are involved in the saints. Who are martyrs? Augustine's mother, Monica. Has a saint that she goes and visits every week in hippo. And she prays. There she, she worships God there, but it's, it's a problem. It, it goes on all across.

[Speaker 1]

About the late antique period, which is the three hundreds and the 400s in the Roman Empire. And that's a problem. That that that problem goes all the way up into the Middle Ages until the reformers come at least. Far as they were able, put an end to it. Okay. Um. One more thing to say about one of the problems. And that is. You have this problem in? The church, your own church about delaying baptism. You may have heard of this before. So, what happens is? You have people that delay their baptism because? Of of a skewed understanding of the Forgiveness of sins is associated with baptism.

[Speaker 1]

So that once you're baptized all of your past, sins are forgiven. But your future ones. A Shepherd of Hermes says you get one sin forgiven after you're baptized in life. I understand. You have the development of the second plank of justification, which is Penance. That's just repentance with tenants. You have to do certain things in order to be forgiven, and if it's a grave sin, your salvation is, is in Jeopardy.

This is why lots of people put off baptism until their deathbed. Constantine. The emperor is one of these guys. A lot of people did this. There's still Christians but not baptized, weird kind of situation.

[Speaker 1]

And not good. Um. It's, there's also the uh associated with. This is the notion that you catechize people first, and then you baptize it so that everybody waited till Easter to get baptized, and before you could get baptized, you had to be. You had to go to a class. What we would say into class a catechetical class? The New Testament. Because in the New Testament everywhere in the book of Acts? You know, someone confessed Christ baptizing? Jesus says, go into all the world and baptize in the name of the father and Holy Spirit. Teaching them so baptism teaching. So you have this idea you have to attain to a certain level of knowledge before you can be baptized, which then easily kind of fits into the problem with infant baptism, so.

[Speaker 1]

Okay, so. I'll stop. Um, so those are the gifts would be given scripture if we give an expanded church. We have the foundations of our social order established worship and sacraments. The succession of faithful Believers, faithful folk all through this time period. You have the challenge of Greek philosophy, which, as we will see when we get to the next talk. They overcame it in lots of great ways, and in some ways they still have problems, especially with the cynicism. Okay. Anything. To say, are you gonna come up? Yeah, yeah, thank you.