

John Lennox "Why I am a Christian?" English Script

조선희 2014-11-22 Sat 07:57 Delete

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Well ladies and gentlemen, it's an immense honor to be with you, (and) all three of you.

And it's lovely to see such a crowd.

Now I spent a lot of time in Russia and in Russia, people lecture while they're sitting, so I'm about to sit.

And you will pardon me because I'm rather elderly, about twice the maximum age of anybody in this room. And therefore it is a much more pleasant thing for me and I hope for you that I sit in this way before you.

I've been asked to address the question "Why I am a Christian?" and I am very delighted that Dan preceded me because ladies and gentlemen, here you have an example of a young man who up until recently found his world closing in on him, and suddenly just over a period of time, something happens to him that begins to expand both his mind and his heart and changes his life fundamentally so that his songs are filled now with meaning.

And you know if I were to summarize in just a few words why I am a Christian, it's because Christ gives me the biggest story to put my life into of any story that there is an offer.

In other words, he solves for me, the problem of meaning and significance. And that's the question we ask all the time. Who am I? What is my significance? And in the sea of humanity, we often feel so terribly small and are feeling so unsuccessful in life.

We look around at those who are more talented, more beautiful, more able, and more skilled and we see the defects in ourselves and we look back over a record of messing it up and we wondered

"Is there any ultimate significance?"

And many atheists will help us and tell us that there is no ultimate significance.

All you are as a human being, is an eczema on the face of the universe with no more significance as one philosopher putted them "a slime mold".

(3:00)

And ladies and gentlemen, the battle in your mind, tonight as well, is the battle over the question, "Who am I?"

I love the ancient Greeks you know, I hope you do.

They were brilliant. And they started examining the universe and they started asking questions, what is this made of? And they got very good at that. So, in our universities, we have all kinds of faculties exploring what things are made of; Materials, science, and so on.

What's the universe made of? What are you made of? And we know a great deal about what we are made of. We can get it repaired, generally speaking up to a certain level.

But the Greeks asked deeper questions. and one of those deeper questions was what is this made for. That's harder question. And it's a question I'd like you to face tonight. you may have never have asked it before. It's this: What am I made for, if anything?

You know so much about what you're made of.

But what were you made for?

Let me illustrate this. Suppose I were to get one of these four by four vehicles that I see plugging up the streets of Perth? and getting in my way .

And I take it home and you're a very good salesman and you decide to follow me up.

So after three months, you turn up at my home and to your utter amazement, the four by four is sitting in the middle of the garden, full of tomato plants.

And you knock my door in great bewilderment, you say "Excuse me professor Lennox,"

"Oh, I'm so glad you came. This is the best greenhouse I've ever had because I've been growing the biggest tomatoes in my neighborhood. You know there is a thing in the front panel here called AC and I find if I tune it just to the right spot and leave it for a few weeks, and I get these colossal tomatoes."

Now, what would you think?

Well I suspected you to advise a psychiatrist but before you did that, you might say, "Old chap, pardon me That's not what it's for." What are you for?

Do you've ever asked something like the question?

You've got various goals in life. And as those goals fall, you discover that somehow they don't satisfy you. How many people I sat with who got to the very top, and I say to them "Where are you going to go from here, what if you discover at the top and the answer is nothing?"

One famous tennis player said "I got to the top and I discovered there was nothing there."

(6:12)

Have you become to discover there's nothing there?

Dan is a fortunate young man and he started to discover it in his twenties.

And we got to be ruthlessly honest ladies and gentleman in asking this question: "What are we for?"

Well No, of course when it comes to my four by four, I would expect the dealer to refer to the book of instructions.

And of course, you know the general rule when all else fails, read the instructions.

And the sophistication of everybody's gizmos these days is such the instructions are in CD's, and in inaccessible places, you rack your brain trying to sort out how to get your iphone connected and all the rest of it.

Are there any instructions for a human being?

Or you say "Don't be foolish. This is the 21st century. Instructions, that's instructions for human beings? That would mean there was an instructor. And now you're beginning to talk about God, aren't you?"

"And you are a professor at Oxford and you want to be ashamed of yourself!

You can't possibly expect us to raise the "God" question and instructions in the 21st century."

Why not ladies and gentlemen?

Where did your iphone come from? It's a brilliant result of technology isn't it?

Where did technology come from? It came from modern science.

Where did modern science come from?

Belief in God ladies and gentlemen, that's where it came from . We've forgotten it of course.

C.S. Lewis put it brilliantly.

"Men became scientific. Why? Because they expected law of nature. Why? Because they believed in the law giver."

You see, I'm not remotely ashamed to be both a scientist and a Christian because Christianity arguably gave me my subject.

Isn't it odd, therefore that Isaac Newton, Galileo, Kepler, Babbage, Clerk Maxwell, all of them are believers in God , it did not hinder the science. It was the powerful motor that drove it.

What's fascinating to me, it's even more fascinating when you realize people like Steven Hawking, who is just ahead of me at Cambridge and light years ahead of me in his brain power, he says "Now you've got to choose between science and God."

Newton didn't say that. The more he studied the universe, the more he admired the genius of the God who did that way. His law of gravity which he incorporated in his famous book " Principia Mathematica", where he said that he hoped it would persuade thinking people to believe in a deity.

How had we moved from Newton to Hawking?

I want to suggest you, ladies and gentlemen, we've moved from Newton to Hawking by series of colossal and partly deliberate misunderstandings of two things.

One is the nature of God and the other is the nature of science, very briefly.

Because this is a part of why I am a Christian, because it makes sense of my science and it gives me a rational basis for doing it.

The problem with God is that many of the atheists who are my friends think that I believe in the God of the

gaps: That is I can't explain it, therefore God did it.

Like the great god of lightning. Do atmospheric physics at the University of Western Australia, that god will disappear in single lecture. Those gods disappear by the advance of science.

(10:04)

and if you think God is a god of the gaps, of course you'll ask people to choose between God and science. But the problem is that's the way you define God.

The God of the Bible isn't the God of the gaps.

He's the God of the whole show; the God of the bits we do understand and the god of the bits we don't understand.

He is the creator and the sustainer of the universe.

And one of the major problems in the contemporary debate is that people relegate the God of the Bible to be a Greek god and then dismiss him.

The argument is pseudo. People who do that haven't the faintest notion about the ancient gods.

But let me tell you that one of the world's authorities on ancient Near eastern gods, Werner Jaeger, a professor at Oxford just says this:

"The difference is vast. The ancient gods in the Greeks, Romans, the Assyrians and Babylonians, are all descended from the universe. They are products of the basic primeval mass energy of the universe. The God of the Bible created the universe." That's the difference.

So, we need to be clear by God, but then we need to be clear about by science.

Because you see, the problem is, people say

"Well we got a law of gravity," says Hawking, "therefore the universe can and will create itself from nothing."

Now, apart from triple logical self contradiction in that sentence, because we got a law of gravity, because we have something, the universe will create itself from nothing which is flat contradiction as well be obviously even at this (time of a night).

What he's saying is, "Because we've done some science, therefore there's no God."

"We got a law of gravity." Marvelous.

What would you think if I said to you,

"Here are two explanations for a motor car for. One, the law of internal combustion. Two, Henry Ford. Please choose."

Well, that's absurd, isn't it?.

I find even children can see what professor can't see.

There are different kinds of explanation.

There is a scientific explanation: Why is the kettle boiling? Because the heat energy has got to such a stage that the molecules of water are vibrating under, spitting off. Steam and the pressure is building up and the whistle going and that's why it's boiling.

No, it isn't. It's boiling because I want a cup of tea.

Well, I'm glad you laugh because now you've understood the difference between two kinds of explanation.

It's the same at the level of the universe ladies and gentlemen.

God is not the same kind of explanation as the scientific explanation.

God is the reason if there are any explanations at all.

Lawrence Krauss wrote an article saying that Higgs boson is arguably more important than God .

I wrote another article answering him saying "Yes, of course Higgs boson is arguably more important than God if the question you're asking, if you're giving a lecture in particle physics.

But if you're asking the question why is there a universe at all in which particles physics can be done, then God is arguably more important than Higgs boson."

You see, what's happening in our culture is people are fooling you by presenting you with a set of false alternatives: God or science, mechanism or agency, gravity or God and all these kind of thing. And the moment's thought shows that they haven't a clue about philosophy.

Stephen Hawking actually says in his book, philosophy is dead. That's about page 3 in his book and the whole

book is about philosophy. and he proves very effectively that at least in his case, the philosophy is completely dead.

I mean that seriously. I find it an astonishing misuse of science for people to argue that science and God are in conflict. They are not.

Where the conflict lies, ladies and gentlemen, is between two world views; Atheism and theism under scientists of the highest level, even the Nobel Prize level of the both sides.

So what we've got to ask really is "Does science lead towards god or lead towards atheism?"

Now, I've made the point from history. I am just going to make another point, because this doesn't get us to Christianity yet, but it clears some of the fog that stands in the way of many people even beginning to see what Christianity claims.

(14:44)

You see, my big reason for rejecting atheism is because I'm a scientist, not because I'm a Christian.

And here's the reason:

What do I do with science with? Well you say in my mind..., well, that's generous, because most of my atheistic colleagues say the mind is the brain. There's nothing but the brain stuff.

Then I ask them what's the brain? and they say the brain is the end product of mindless unguided process. And then I say, "And you trust it?"

Isn't that ironical, that people are prepared to trust what they themselves believed to be the end product of mindless unguided process when if they knew that their computer, which they use for 23 hours a day, was the end product of mindless unguided process.

Atheism doesn't shoot itself in the foot, ladies and gentlemen. It's far worse than that. It shoots itself in the brain and that's fatal.

Now you see that Christian, the believer in God, has a reason for doing science. It's the reason that Galileo, Kepler, Newton have, which is why science exploded in the 16th and 17th centuries. It's that they expected and believed science could be done because they believed in that rational creator.

You see, faith lies behind science. Both faith in God, and then the next step, the faith in the rational intelligibility of the universe that springs from a belief in a rational God.

I hope you are with me so far because these arguments are enormously important and you'll notice they're dead simple. They're no tricks here. These arguments are very simple indeed,

But the fog is such that when a high-powered person says "God is a delusion" as Stephen Hawking put it the other day when interviewed. He said, "Belief in God, religion is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark"

And I was asked to comment. So I did in like fashion. "Atheism is a fairy story for people afraid of the light".

You shouldn't clap. Statements like that don't prove anything. You see, the big problem that comes out of that is this - that statements by scientists aren't always statements of science. And I repeat that: **Statements by scientists aren't always statements of science.**

You get Carl Sagan, very famous for this TV series called "The Universe Is All That There Is, Was, Or Ever Shall Be". That's not a statement of science. It's a statement of his atheistic belief. That's all it is.

Now you see ladies and gentlemen, once we clear that fog, we can come to the simple thing. Because what we got next to see is that God isn't a theory; He's a person. And that brings me to the other way of accessing knowledge about God. We can read certain things from the universe, I believe. We can see there's a rational intelligence behind the universe. The Bible itself claims that Paul said in one of his most famous writings, "The invisible things of God-that is his eternal power and Godhead- that there is a God are perceived, are clearly seen, from the things that are made." Nature isn't neutral; it's got a signature written all over it. But that's as far as you get.

But you see, think about it logically. Here we are persons, we're not just theories. My wife isn't a theory. I can guarantee you that. she's a person. Are we to imagine that the source of our being is less than person, of course not. That defies against very analogy we know, and the God who now reveals himself in the Bible. Now here's the important thing, ladies and gentlemen. The moment I mention the word "reveal", all people get very allergic and nervous saying we believe in rationality, we believe in reason. "We don't, quoting Richard Dawkins, believe in Holy books", as if you don't need a reason to read a holy book.

Revelation and reason don't contradict each other. Have you ever met anybody that can read the Bible without using the reason? of course not. That's not the issue. The issue is this ladies and gentlemen. Is this universe a closed system of cause and effect, or is it open? And if it's open, here we are thinking, feeling, rational beings, with all the emotions and richness of our capacity for music and love and art. Is there a God who's revealed himself? The claim of the Bible is there is.

(20:01)

And here's the thing. I could analyze you with a scanning tunneling microscope of the most extreme advanced character and never get to know you. The only way I'd ever get to know you is if you talk you know, and reveal yourself to me. And that's the only way you'd ever get to know me.

Now, here's the exciting about Christianity. It's that the claim is "In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth, and God said let us make man in our own image."

Do you realize what that means? The stars and the galaxies that you see so clearly sometimes over head and turf, they're not made by God's image, they show his glory. And **you** were made in God's image.

Just think of the value that gives you. I think it is powerful stuff, to be able to tell men and women that they're of infinite value and dignity made in the image of God. And therefore creative with all those talents and gifts.

But the sad thing is we find a world that's broken and bruised it looks as if a bomb had hit it. Dan talked about an explosion in his own heart. It's a good metaphor. It's a bit like Christ Church Cathedral, isn't it? Traces of beauty we can see, but lots of damage through an earthquake, or Coventry Cathedral; traces of beauty and damage through bombing and the world present us a mixed picture.

But that doesn't take away from the fact that we're made in the image of God. It just points out that. We see that. It's a living memory, but we feel a disjointedness between the concept of being made in the image of God to perfection and the mass and the stuff that keeps forming up like vomit inside our own personality and destroying us from the inside. And every one of you young people know you're only one click away from disaster at any time in the contemporary age, One click... I did battle with it. I grew up in a very different world. I was so protected But I see my children, my grandchildren surrounded by a sea of intellectual sharks and moral sharks wanting to destroy their lovely personality.

How can you recover that? And here's the brilliance of the Christian message; **God became human!** Now ladies and gentleman, one of the biggest arguments in our society is that human beings are special. Your famous Professor Peter singer whom I debated thinks not. I think he is wrong.

And one of the most powerful arguments for human beings are special is that God became one. How about that? That's big stuff, isn't it?

You see, Dan pointed it out, he said the claims Jesus made were incredible, we'd miss them if we don't sit and reflectively take them seriously. He stood in our world, at his age about 30 and said "**I am the truth!**" He didn't simply say "I say the truth." Well, that's true. He said I **am** the truth. What? You mean if you ask the truth about this universe and you reduce it to atoms and elementary particles, and asked what's the truth about them, and keep on asking, you'll come to Jesus Christ who will stand and say "I am the truth". Is that big enough for you?

The thing that I find sad about my atheist friends is the tininess of their world, ladies and gentlemen. They don't

have a God to begin it. It was some kind of spontaneous combustion and we can talk about that. I've written a book about it. And they don't have a God to sum it up. They live in a tiny space and the space of each individual is about 70 years, give it or take it a little bit and then the silence they believe and the blackness of an eternal tomb. What sort of existence is that?

Richard Dawkins said "Yes. It's bleak, but that doesn't mean it's false."
I said "Richard, it's bleak, but that doesn't mean it's true."

(24:53)

How would we know that this world isn't in the closed system? **Because in space, time and history, God incarnated Jesus Christ was crucified, died and broke the death barrier by rising again from the dead.** That's why I'm sitting here.

"You see, you can't believe all that stuff as a scientist. I mean, after all miracles are violations of the laws of nature. Come on! you cannot believe that stuff. David Hume proved long ago."

No, he didn't. it's so easy to see he didn't. you know. And Louis again pointed out brilliantly in the 1940's; I'm staying in a hotel in Perth. I put a hundred dollars into my drawers last night. I put a hundred dollars tonight, and tomorrow I find 50 dollars. What does that mean? That laws of arithmetic were broken or the laws of western Australia?

Oh I'm glad you laughed because you see the difference of the two uses of the word 'law'. We get so hung up on this, we think laws and science are somehow causes or they are like a law that's passed by the government that you violate, notice the word "violate", that's nonsense.

How did you know that a thief had taken 150 dollars out of my drawer?; because you know the laws of arithmetic.

That's how people realized that something spectacular had happened when Jesus appear from the dead. because they knew that dead people don't just come wandering about after they died! If they didn't know that dead people normally remain dead, they would've not been remotely surprised at seeing Jesus. But when he appeared from the dead, it was such an enormous authority and power, enough to transform 11 men into men that conquered the ancient world, and brought the message of Christianity throughout the world. There's evidence in history. But the thing is real. There is a famous ancient historian put it: **There is a resurrection shaped hole in history!**

That's a long ago, ladies and gentlemen. And so I come to the next set of reasons. Why I am a Christian? Because it works, ladies and gentlemen. You see, Christianity is testable. You say it's not testable, the only testable things are in science. Jesus Christ promises you, that if tonight, you take all that stuff that is clogging up your conscious and your heart and repent of it, and deliberately as a 'step' say, "Lord, you died for this. I don't understand how it works, but you died for this. To take all that mess upon yourself. I don't know how you did it. I don't know why you did it but I see that you did do it. And I'm prepared to trust you." He promises you that you will tonight receive forgiveness, receive eternal life, a new quality of life and that will make in time such a difference to you as it made in Dan. How many hundreds of times I've seen marriages saved, where people were fighting each other out in the courts and suddenly they come to encounter Christ and they realized both of them are desperately wrong and they seek forgiveness and they repent and you've got a marriage to the foundations of a happy full home and some more children of them have chance, a half decent chance of a life. How many times have I seen drugs that are poisoning someone's brain got rid of, back to sanity, back to life, back to meaningfulness.

Do you know when you see that, you begin to think there's something in this business people have been friendless and lonely and isolated. Ladies and gentlemen, the trouble is we've believed an colossal lie. it's been going on for millennia. It's that God is somehow against us. Christopher Hitchens once said to me in a debate "who would want a great North Korean dictator in the sky watching you?" I said, " Christopher, you make me very sad. Who would want a woman in their house watching them all the time? My wife isn't in the house all the time."

29:59

And I said "Christopher, If the person watching you is not a North Korean dictator but someone who loves you, it's wonderful to have them in your home and in your life."

Ladies and gentleman, don't believe the lie that God is out to repress and suppress all your human flourishing. On page 2 of the bible you'll see how that entered into the world, how the enemy said to the first humans, God has said that the day you eat that, you will surely die, because he knows that when you eat it, you will be as God knowing good and evil, and they fell for it, and they've been falling from it ever since. Just ask your selves do you think of God as an enemy, if you do, you believed the lie. It's as simple as that. And a wonderful thing to discover is God for us, "God so loved the world", listen to those words, they're magnificent. **"God so loved the world that he gave his only son whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."** It's, I mean those words magnificent and you see these ladies and gentlemen, I am a Christian because Jesus doesn't compete with anybody on the score.

There's nobody else in all of history offers me credibly, forgiveness, and eternal life. So, I'm not insulting any other religion by taking it from him but nobody offers it. Do you see that? It's very important you do see it. This is a huge thing.

Why I am a Christian? Do you know the biggest thing in all my life even as a professor at Oxford, what ever that means, is that I'm loved, ladies and gentlemen. Loved, at a level that I will never begin to understand the love that has power over death.

I love my father, but I've lost him.
No I haven't! I'll see him again, because Jesus is risen.
It means death is not the end. That gives you real hope, That gives us a real message and also ladies and gentlemen, it brings back into the world a concept that's rapidly disappearing, and that's the concept of morality and ultimate justice.

Listen! Don't get on the atheist bus before you know where it's going. Where's it going?
Well listen to Richard Dawkins described the bleakness of the universe, this universe is just exactly what you expected to be, he says at bottom there's no good, there's no evil. There's no justice.
DNA just is, and we dance to its music.

That's all there is tonight ladies and gentlemen. The terrorist's bombers, the young man from my country who proudly held in his hand the head of the journalist and all our people's today is just dancing to the music of these DNA. Who can blame them for that?

Ideas have consequences. And if you teach a generation of young people in Australia or anywhere else, that all forms of behavior are acceptable, that we're simply animals, that startled from behaving like that they have already. How can you blame them?

And! if Hitler gets all the power, all he has to do is to blow his brains out when he's cornered. He never faced justice, if there is no justice. And you see this is another reason why I cannot conceivably accept atheism. I've been to Auschwitz many times.
The vast majority of the people of who have ever lived, will never see justice of atheism history.
The vast majority of people currently alive on planet earth will never see justice because they won't get in this life. And there's no other life off which they can conceivably get it.

Is there a concept of justice and morality is an illusion? No, it is not.
Because **God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world by the man he has appointed, and given evidence toward all men, not just to believers, by raising him from the dead.** It's a magnificent thing that there's going to be a judgment.

The people aren't going to get away with it. But that makes come of us tremble doesn't it, we're not going to get away with it, are we?

(34:57)
and that's why the Christian message is utterly unique. Because Jesus stood in our world, and he said, **Truly I say to you whoever hears my word and believes on him who sent me, has already eternal life, and shall not come into judgment but has already passed from death to life.**

You said you really believe that? Yes. I do. Why? Because who Jesus is, ladies and gentlemen. He invented the atom. Richard Dawkins mocked me once for believing that Jesus walked on water. And I said to him. Jesus invented water in the first place. Maybe it's not such a big deal that he can walk on it.

I'm done; you are gonna have time for question. But I appeal to you young people, I want you never to forget this evening, because you see I'm telling you what so many people when they reach their 50's and 60's wished they'd heard when they were 17 and 18. Don't waste your life.

Invest it in reality! But you only believe in reality if there is evidence. You probably came with a Christian friend tonight squeezed the guts out of them to get the information out of them what Christianity means.

Plague them. It's so important to be sure; I understand people are not sure. But you can be sure, Why? Because it's not you simply seeking God, God's seeking you. And he came into the world to find you, wouldn't it be wonderful if you met him tonight? Thank you very much.

(37:23)

Interviewer: Well, Thank you, Professor Lennox, we're going to have a some time now to look at the question's you've sent in, so John will take us through those. And a, and then, back up to finish tonight. So I'll leave you with John again.

John: Good, well thank you for these questions Lady's and gentlemen.

Q: Why do so many kids who grow up from church drift away from God and church?

A: The main reason given in our country is because they don't ask, answer our questions. Let me speak to those of you who do go to church, we need to get our act together. We have been scandalously lacks in not facing the questions of a younger generation. Many in the older generations think they settled all the things, and a new raft of questions have come up to which I find even many ministers and churches have no answers.

And if you're talking irrelevancy in church on Sunday, you loose everybody. Of course you lose them. Because they watch T.V. It's professionally done, they see it answers, they see wonderful discussions of science, music, and so on. So, we got to get to our act together. So that's one of the main reasons.

There are other reasons of course. People sometimes, discover rightly that Christ makes moral demands but they are not prepared for them. They think they can run the automobile that is human life without the instructions and they don't realize that the instructions are written by somebody who loves us. And we have a great task to do, to repair that to show LIVING Christianity to our young people. Have them into your home. How many of my children's friends come into the home and they just say to my sons, my daughter, "Your home is so different, and why is that?" Be a witness! Engage! All of these things are so vastly important, and I'm tempted to preach a sermon about it but I'll not.

(39:40)

Q: What do you think about the academics and the theologians who insists the Passion narratives are legendary in character that nothing can really be known about Jesus' resurrection?

A: I don't really think much about them, simply because that ancient historians who know more about ancient history aren't in that category. You got a very famous ancient historian here in Australia, his name is Edwin Judge. If you want an answer to that question read Edwin Judge. Ancient historians don't doubt the existence of Jesus, I've never met one because the evidence is much more powerful than many people think. The evidence is far stronger for the authenticity for say, the gospel of Luke than it is for Caesar's Gallic wars, which some of us studied in school, to our pain or our delight, in my case delight. But we are not taught that, most people have no idea of the documentary evidence for the authenticity of Scripture. Now, if the person who asked this question is really interested in it, they will follow that up. There's a lot of literature here but start with Edwin Judge, who as an ancient historian is world class in his thinking.

Q: What do you think about Christianity being the enemy of free thinking?

A: Well, I think it's entirely wrong. But it is an impression that some Christians have either deliberately or unwittingly given. Ladies and gentlemen, it should be obvious if you have ever read the commandments that **the first commandment is to love the LORD your God with all your mind, soul, heart and strength**. To love the LORD with your mind; How did that commandment get lost in some spiritual traditions? You are insulting God if you don't love God with your mind. That's one of the reasons Christianity goes dead in so many professional people. They love their business with their mind. I even know some people who know all the football scores for the last fifty years by heart. But when it comes to the Bible they don't know it, they haven't got to know it. They go to church, they say they are prayers, and so on, but they long since lost any cutting edge of witness because when they open their mouths about their faith it's inarticulate and it's so puerile that their colleagues see it, so they are silenced forever. And you're living in this society so am I, where the biggest pressure is to privatize our faith, keep it to yourself.

You want to believe in Jesus? That's nice for you. But don't you bring it in the public space.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to bring it into the public space.

You need to get the courage to do the same thing.

Your public space isn't necessarily this size, it's the person you know at work,

Are you living in a silent world when it comes to Christianity, and a loud world when it comes to music and football and everything else and politics?

Just analyze your conversations of the last week, how much time have you invested in dissecting the previous prime minister of Australia and how much time have you spent discussing God with people?

That will tell you something. How much time have you spent looking at a screen and how much time have you spent looking at scripture?

We'll never reach this generation if we play religion. And some of you young people, I challenge, you if you're going to influence this world for God, you need to take scripture seriously and God's words seriously. And get into it and spend hours in it. Immerse your life in it. And then you will not have people around you saying: Why is Christianity the enemy of thought? I grew up in a home where Christianity was the most expansive, most intellectually searching belief system that I could ever imagine. And when I met the others I found them so cramping, that it just wasn't true. Forgive me, I might wax eloquent about that, you see.

Q: How do you feel about the western world moving away from Christianity? How do you respond?

A: Well, you know it's like a starfish, millions of starfish stranded on the beach and the man is going along, he picks up one, he throws it back. And somebody says, "Well, you're not helping much. It makes no difference." And he said, "it does to that starfish." And that's the way to start ladies and gentlemen. If you don't break the barrier of silence individually, we'll never do anything. We are brilliant at leaving it to the pastor and leaving to the other person, this is not my task. The New Testament doesn't imagine a silent, non-evangelizing Christian. We are not talking about the gift of evangelism like Billy Graham, we're talking about the command. To answer people's questions. And the apostle Peter says: "**Always be ready to give an answer to those who ask you.**" He (-?-) dialogue(44:58), have you noticed that? And our task is to provoke dialogue. Right.

Q: As you brought up C.S Lewis, Aslan defeated the White witch of the famous book: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. What was the link between that and Jesus? Why actually did Christ have to die? As if it was a rule he had to obey?

A: It wasn't a rule he had to obey. He laid his life freely ladies and gentlemen. Because he loved you and me. And why did he have to die? Because sin is a killer haven't you realized that yet? Sin is the biggest problem every government in the world faces today. Now we think of sin usually in a couple of areas like sex and so on, so let's think of it, it's messing up, it's our innate human capacity to make an absolute mess of things. It's the biggest problem. It's a killer. It's killing people in Perth tonight, dead before the morning. I can't explain to you how Christ's death deals with it. I can't tell you what gravity is, ladies and gentlemen, nobody knows what it is. So don't expect me to be able to explain something infinitely deeper. But I believe in Christ's death, it is effective because it works. And because it makes sense.

Q: What is my view of evolution and creation?

A: Considerable and extensive. I've written a book on it called: God's Undertaker as Science Buried God and I've Written a second book on it called: *Achoo*. That's the main title and the subtitle is Seven days that divide

the world. Ladies and gentlemen, this is a huge topic, we need a whole evening on it, if you're serious, just google my name, I have dozens of lectures on this. But you can't, whatever you believe about evolution and creation, you cannot deduce atheism from evolution but if you want to know why just have a look. We can't go in to that in detail.

Q: What is the biggest faith shaker you have faced and how do you answer?

A: It's a important question because you see, the way faith grows is by questioning and exposing it to it's opposite. Precisely because I grew up in a strong Christian environment, I'm not like Dan you see, I have no idea what it's like to be a young adult and not be a believer, he does. So those of you like that should listen to him and talk to him. I don't know what it's like so I needed a guide, C.S Lewis was a major guide. But what I've spent my entire life doing is exposing my faith to questioning.

What is the biggest faith shaker? Well, it could be suffering, couldn't it? That's the hardest question I face. I arrived in Christchurch two days after the earthquake, I preached at the biggest service that has been held in Christchurch for many years the Sunday after I had to meet people who had lost their relatives. And this is the hard question, ladies and gentlemen. It's a very hard question. And there are no simplistic answers to it and the trouble is, you see, that my heart goes out to people who have rejected God because of pain and suffering. It can't make any sense, particularly of what one might call senseless pain. And many people become atheists because of it. And I can understand that up to a certain extent. And they just say that's the way the universe is. It shows there's no mind behind it. there's certainly no love behind. You can talk about intelligent behind the universe if you like, but please don't talk to me about a personal god. I understand that. But it is not good enough, ladies and gentlemen.

Firstly, if you become an atheist because of it, you are faced with an intellectual problem immediately what is evil. Richard Dawkins takes the logical consequences of his belief system. And he says that there is no good. There is no evil, and yet, he endlessly talks about the problems of evil.

(49:58)

There's a disconnect there. He doesn't realize which something that nature realized but nature then was a real atheist and he understood the consequences. Nature says that if you get god out of the equation, then you will end up getting all values out of it. And you get good and evil out of the equation. They are ruling out of our society now. There are staggering surveys of North American young college age kids who simply on the basis of clever questioning reveal that they have no idea of what good and evil are.

Now that's a serious side issue. But you see atheism doesn't get rid of the suffering does it? In fact it can be argued that it makes ten thousand times worse. Because it gets rid of all hope. I have a problem with pain and suffering because I continued to believe in God. But you see Ladies and Gentlemen, this brings us straight, the only place in the whole of the universe I see a way into this question is **the Cross**. Because at the very least, that was GOD on the cross. What's he doing there?

I'll never forget being in one of the largest synagogues in the world. I was trying to help a young Jewish lady understand the Yiddish that the rabbi was talking.. my Yiddish is very poor, I speak German. I was doing the best.. then I'm afraid I was taking translators license and we were in an exhibition of the festivals of Israel beginning with the Passover and so on.. so I took a little bit of liberty since I didn't understand everything to explain up this found fulfillment in Jesus the Messiah. So I was just gently adding what was being said.

And eventually I had noticed that in the middle of the room, there's a big montage, and it was the gate of Auschwitz, "**Arbeit Macht Frei(Works will set (you) free)**", and she stooped, very intelligent architect, put her hands out, across the door. She said, "What does your religion make of that?" And I said I wouldn't insult your memory of your parents who were gassed behind those gates by giving you some simple explanation. I said you know, you've asked me, and I'm gonna answer your question but it's gonna be very difficult - you know that I believe that Jesus is, **Yeshua is HaMashiach, the Messiah** and she nodded her hands still like this (refer to above description on what she was doing).

I said the next step is even harder because he came to be God incarnated. And I said that is very hard for you to accept but just try and follow me and I'm trying just to accept for a moment that that might be true. You know he died on the cross and she nodded still with her hands like that.

And I said if that's God on the cross what's it saying? I said that the very least it's telling me that God has not remained distant from the problem of human suffering but has himself become a part of it, and the tears just burst from her faces and still stood forming across and she said these words that I shall never forget she said **"Why has no one ever told me that about my Messiah before?"**

He didn't only die Ladies and Gentlemen, **He rose from the dead.** That's what gives me hope. There is to be a judgment - God will see that justice is done and he will do it and it will be seen to be done. Atheism is nothing of that I said that to you earlier. So I think there is a way in but we must do it acceptably. It can take years to work off the loss or the abuse, and we may never really get over it but to discover a God that loves us and is prepared to surround us with his love and to promise us one day a new body to replace the one it's been abused. That's a magnificent thing to be able to tell people. There's a related problem and I'm gonna stop with it because my time's up.

Q: How can I be convinced that Christianity is the only truth about God? Why should it hold more credibility than Buddhism or Hinduism?

A: Well ladies and gentlemen you have to decide that on the basis of evidence. Which of them really makes sense and answers your questions. On the historical level if we simply take Judaism, Christianity and Islam. My Jewish friends believe that Jesus died and did not rise. My Muslim friends believe that he didn't die. and I believe that he both died and rose, those three things cannot be simultaneously true.

So you've got to ask yourself the question. But the reason I'm a Christian is because you see religion in general and is generally depicted. I was at an entrance gate, followed by a way which I drew a wiggly line followed by a judgment. You know that kind of thing, like the University of Western Australia. You get in through some exam and some ceremonies you're on your way and your professors, gurus and imams are pleased to help you. But even they can't guarantee you're going to be accepted at the end. And however kind your professors at the University are, they cannot guarantee that you're going to be accepted at the end. Why? because **the basic principle is your merit.** And how many times I have said to put someone from religions including Christianity by the way they said that is what my religion teaches!

That is not what Christianity teaches and here is the utterly revolutionary way. **Christianity is not a system of merit and that's why I could know before I could leave this place is called has accepted me. Because Christ has died for me.**

I often illustrated. I met my wife at the first day of University, she was 16 but that's a different story. She's the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. Anyway, now of course I wanted to marry her eventually so I came to her one day and I presented her with a cookbook and it's full of laws you know, if you're going to make an apple cake, thou shalt take so much grams of sugar, thou shalt take so many kilos of flour, thou shalt take so much water you should boil and mix and so on.

So I said "Now Sally, it's going to be like this, you see. I couldn't possibly accept you now. I mean, if you followed the prescriptions in this book for forty years I'd say, then I will think about accepting you. So how about becoming my wife? Do you think I did that? Why are you laughing?

Do you know that's how millions of people think of God? You wouldn't insult a fellow human being by suggesting your relationship with them was based on merit, would you? Yet millions of People think exactly like that of God. If I try and keep the rules then perhaps one day you'll accept me. That's slavery ladies and Gentlemen! And it's one of the biggest reasons that people are running away from religion because Christianity has been interpreted like that and it's the exact opposite.

You imagine my wife having tried this for a year or two and really taking it seriously and wanting to bake an apple cake then she suddenly realized that if she doesn't do it perfectly she's back to her mother. And she turns the knob up to a thousand degree centigrade and out comes a burnt offering. That's exactly what happened and people are trying to keep the rules and they become cramped and they become narrowed. They feel oppressed, they say God I'm not remotely interested in you. And they miss the whole point over God so loves them he spreads his arms out across and say, you can't make an old chap of your own. I'm prepared to die for you and give you a free pardon right now.

Ladies and Gentlemen, do you know why my wife is such a good cook? Because my acceptance of her doesn't depend on it. I don't go around the world talking about God like tonight, in order in hope that one day God will accept me. I do it because he has accepted me. Do you see the difference? And you will know, those of you who are married, that the essence of a marriage is that security of acceptance that's independent of the minor vagaries of the way we behave. Why would we insult God by suggesting to him we can merit him? And **you see here that Christianity isn't competing with anybody**. Because it's utterly unique.

Ladies and gentlemen! It is 5 past nine. I have sinned massively in going 5 minutes over my time. Thank you very much indeed!