The Doctrine of God in the Church

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[0:00] Thank you all for the opportunity to be here. If you have a Bible, you can open it up to Hebrews.! We'll be kind of in 11 through 13. And as you come into chapter 11 of Hebrews, the author makes a list of the great works of faith that have come through history up until that point.

And very interesting for this session, interesting for you to know, is that it's not just history, it's theological commentary on history and with history. And so it's a history of Hebrews 11, 33 to 38. Men and women who, through faith, conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put armies to flight, foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment.
They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with the sword. These were those men and women of which the author says the world was not worthy of them. So God would have us, by this example, constantly to be drawing inspiration from heroes and role models out of church history.
[1:26] And we don't make much of history. We fail this for a few reasons. I was reading this week a book by Luis Marcos and he says, students have lost their historical sense. He's talking about you.

High school, middle school, and high school students. He says, you don't have a connection. You've lost your historical sense. And he says, in part, it's because in the 19th century, we rolled the subject of history in schools over to social studies.
And so now you've got a little bit of history that's mixed with sociology and economics and anthropology with a little splash of psychology. And he says, we just need pure history sometimes so we can be inspired.
And he says, our loss of historical sense makes it difficult to judge and measure the beliefs and outcomes of our current moments against those of the past. So we don't appreciate history, I think one, as he's saying, because we're ignorant of it, which means our minds have been separated from our own history.
And we know names like Joe Rogan and Olivia Rodrigo and Elon Musk and Patrick Mahomes and Mr. Beast.
[2:30] But we forget or we don't know names like Perpetua and Felicity and Corrie ten Boom and Erman Frank and George Mueller and John Rogers, if you were here last year.

And these are our heroes. And so more dangerous even than being separated by ignorance would be to be separated by apathy. Ignorance is you don't know.
Apathy is a step farther and it says, I just don't care. And if that's where you are, I hope you'll be inspired tonight. But apathy says, I don't care. It's not your mind is separated from history, but your heart is also separated from history.
It's dulled to it. And so you can scroll endlessly to try and gain inspiration from the present, but you won't do the hard work of gaining inspiration from the past. Some of you don't value the past.
And if you're ignorant or apathetic, what you're missing out on is something called heroic memory. You don't have a heroic memory, the heroes and the role models and the amazing sources of inspiration that scripture tells us.
[3:31] People like this are what guide us to godliness and guide us into Christ-likeness. We're supposed to look at these people. And so you either have no heroes or what's worse, you have the wrong heroes.

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And to quote Al Mohler, our society has the wrong heroes. And so I want to increase your heroic memory tonight by teaching you about a servant of God, a man named George Mueller.
If you've heard that name before, would you please raise your hand so we can see. So most of you know, I hope if you do know him, if you don't know him, I'm excited. I'm most excited for you. If you do know him, I pray that tonight you'll learn just a little bit more about his story and through this new lens along the subject of the theme of this weekend, Mueller teaches us above all that you don't need power or wealth or influence or pedigree to be a great hero or a great man or woman of God. Because he had none of those things. His story is legendary because of his faith and his faithfulness and that's it. And so I hope you'll be inspired and above all, what I hope you get out of this is that you walk in his footsteps, that you're inspired to go and do great things on behalf of the kingdom of God.
And you'll see that even his life and ministry were inspired by the heroes before him because we all need heroes. Everybody needs heroes in the faith. And so our task tonight is to not only give a history but a theological commentary on the life of George Mueller.
[4:57] And so based on this, his entire life, the driving theological principle for Mueller was the immutability of God. And you guys have already been taught that yesterday we're building on that because I want you to see immutability in action.

Immutability where this isn't just a definition that you memorize in your mind but you build your life on it. If you were to build your life on these principles that you're learning, this is what it should look like. If you really believe it, if you really pattern yourself off of it, and by way of review, you've been here, I haven't, what is immutability?
God doesn't change. Anybody want to add to that? God doesn't change is a great definition. We say he doesn't change in his character or in his will or in his promises.
Put this way, Hebrews 13.8, if you wanted to mark, this is a verse that defined his life. You can say it with me, Jesus Christ is the same, say it, yesterday and today and forever.
Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and today and forever. Isaiah 26.4, he is the rock of ages. And Mueller shows, again, these attributes of God are a faithful framework for you to build your life on and to pattern your life after.
[6:11] And to introduce you to him, Mueller was born September 27, 1805 in Kroppenstedt, Prussia. So his context is a little different from yours. That's modern-day Germany where he grew up and he came to minister in England in Bristol which if you know where London is in England, if you go 118 miles due west, you'll end up in Bristol where you can still find all of the evidence that he was there.

And he was a contemporary. We have Spurgeon College here. He was a contemporary of Spurgeon. He was a contemporary of one of my role models, Andrew Reid, who was there in London. He was a contemporary of William Booth, if you've heard of the Salvation Army.
London was so poor, East London was the most poor and so that's where William Booth came in and he started the Salvation Army there with Andrew Reid. It's all going on at the same time. It's the same orphan crisis.
And so Mueller, his legacy, he engaged in a lifetime of ministry, converted in 1825 and he didn't die until 1898.
So he lived to be 92 years old and he preached in his lifetime over 10,000 sermons which if you do the math is just under three sermons a week over 73 years of continuous ministry.
[7:27] His Armin schools that he opened which is just German for poor schools, his poor schools educated over 120,000 children with a Christian education. He collected the modern equivalent of 120 million pounds or 180 million dollars through his ministry, the Scriptural Knowledge Institute, but himself living in poverty, dying with a net worth of only 169 pounds.

He engaged in extensive missionary tours. He became a missionary at the age of 70 and did the equivalent of an entire lifetime worth of missions. So between 1875 and 1892, he traveled before planes 200,000 miles by steamboat and train to preach in over 40 countries across Europe and America and India and China and Japan and Australia preaching the gospel.
He started the Scripture Knowledge Institute where he gave away 285,000 Bibles and 111 million books.
What he's most famous for is none of these things. If you read Spurgeon's biography by Dallimore, he says that the Stockwell orphanage that Spurgeon opened was the greatest sermon that Spurgeon ever preached.

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And I think that's absolutely true. You come to Mueller's life, he's not known for the 10,000 sermons, he's known for the 10,024 orphans that he brought a home to over his lifetime.
[8:57] And to put that in perspective, that is, he housed an orphan for every sermon that he preached over the course of his lifetime, almost three a week.

And so you pastors in the room, you can think about that and chew on that. He's known primarily from his five massive orphan houses that he built in Bristol at Ashley Down. That is his legacy.
So what did he do? He preached and he educated and he gave and he founded and he adopted children. And what drove Mueller the whole time was God's unchanging nature.
You can hear what he wrote in Mr. E.H. Glinney's album. He said, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever. And like the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews quoted from the 102nd Psalm, we may say of Jehovah, but while all else changes and perishes, thou remainest and thou art the same.
And you can write this verse down. There's a few verses that really influenced his life. The first was Psalm 68.5. He discovers that into his ministry. Anybody that deals with vulnerable children knows this verse.
[10:00] Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is the Lord in his holy habitation. He settles the lonely in families. That's what God does. These are God's titles.

He is the father of the fatherless. That's his name. He is the protector of widows. He takes those who have no home and he gives them a home. And so Mueller believed that just like the prophets before him, every biblical prophet talked about vulnerability.
The thing that George Mueller dedicated his life to and he says, we can prove today just like as the biblical prophets talked about, just like through the early church, we can prove that God changes not.
And so he says that we can say like them, let the God who cares for orphans let him be God. And you could likewise say after him, it's the same unchanging God, let the God who heals marriages let him be God.
And you give orphans and you give dire situations over to this Lord of glory who does not change. And so for him, there's a public crisis. There's an orphan crisis in England.
[11:03] And for him, it would serve as the public theater to display the immutability of God to the world because God is the father of the fatherless and always has been. That's his name. And so here's the orphan crisis.

He's the same yesterday and today and forever. And so he can be trusted to care for orphans today. That was his logic. And you can hear him talk about this verse. He said, this word, a father to the fatherless contains enough encouragement to cast thousands of orphans upon the loving heart of God.
And he takes that and at the end of 73 years, he's cast not thousands but 10,000 orphans onto the loving heart of God because of that verse. And so I want to dig into his life and I want to give you his life through a couple of distinct chapters.
And so the chapter of his life through this lens, I want to call conversion or immutability and conversion. So if it helps to you like it does for my brain to have some divisions, chapter one of our story or of his story is immutability and conversion because Mueller didn't wake up loving orphans. As a matter of fact, I read Generous Justice by Tim Keller a few weeks ago and he says, even when we're Christian, he says, how come so many Christians are out there seemingly not caring for vulnerable people? And he said, there lies dormant in our hearts this desire to love orphans and widows and sojourners, but it has to be awakened by preaching and by the word and we have to convict one another as the church and that's what happened with Mueller.
[12:29] He didn't just will himself into this. He didn't just wake up one day and love this. He had to be given a new heart supernaturally by God. And for him, that didn't happen until he was 20 years old.

So as he's growing up, his dad prayed that he would be a Catholic clergyman, kind of a Catholic pastor, but as you'll soon see, he didn't really care about that.
He cared about one thing and it was himself. By age 10, he was already cheating his family. The government gave some money to the family that was earmarked for his father and he decided that was for him and so he took it.

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He had a massively indulgent heart. By age 16, would the 16-year-olds raise your hand? When he was your age, what he liked to do was to go and rent hotel rooms and rack up the bill and rack up these massive charges and then sneak away in the middle of the night before anybody noticed. And he got away with this for a while until he didn't. And he gets caught and he gets thrown into prison. It's kind of a funny story when he's in jail, he's bored out of his skull and so he asked one of the guards, out of boredom, can I have a Bible to read?
[13:39] And the guards say, no. They deny his request. He loved to drink. He loved to play cards. If you're too young to know what that means, that's not the good kind of drinking and that's not the good kind of playing cards.

He knows that his mother is dying and so the night that his mother passes away, he's drunk in the streets. And it wasn't until he was completely broke and was stealing bread from soldiers to eat that he started to question his morality in any kind of meaningful way.
He was the worst of sinners. So at his, when he was 18 years old there in 1822, his dad finally kicks him out of the house. He put up with it for long enough.
Mueller goes to Nordhausen, Germany to study and he resolves, he's going to kind of outwardly reform himself. Does that usually go well for people? Can you just will yourself into good works and being a good person?
Is that how it works? No, that's not how it works. But he tries. He tries it for a while. And so he wakes up every day at 4 a.m. and he starts studying and he studies until 10 p.m. and he becomes a model student.
[14:45] He's everybody's favorite student. He learns Latin. He reads books. He even reads some religious books. And this whole time that he's in school, he grew up Catholic and so every now and then he goes to the church and he does communion and every time he comes to the communion table he swears to God that he'll be better.

And he said, and then every time he came back to the communion table he'd failed and he had to swear to God again. And so in God's providence and God's grace and God's sovereignty God has mercy on George in November of 1825.
And how did he do it? When Mueller was 20 years old his friend invited him to what we would call now a life group. Is there power in inviting people to participate in the church?
Is there power in inviting people to participate in Jesus Christ? When you do that people say yes. It's incredible. When you're faithful to do this people say yes. He says yes and he comes and he experiences not only the gospel but Christian hospitality and he shows up and he's a rough guy and he sees all these people and they're put together and they're praying and he apologizes for what he looks like.
He apologizes for being there and for existing and the people say this to him in response and when he doesn't fit in the host says come as often as you please house and heart are open to you.
[16:04] And he said that changed his life forever. He said and they sang a hymn together and they read the Bible and they got on their knees and they prayed for a long time and he said these uneducated people were praying more lengthy and more ornate prayers than he was and he didn't understand how that could be and he hears the gospel for the first time and he leaves feeling happy and he can't explain it.

It reminds me of John Wesley for you church history buffs where he has the Aldersgate Street he says I felt my heart strangely warmed where he heard the preface to the commentary of Luther on Romans and he says I don't understand what's happening my heart's warm that's what happens to Mueller he's like I'm so happy and I don't understand where it comes from and so he writes all former pleasures are as nothing compared to this meeting and it's because his heart was converted he had been born again and so from that moment on he gave his life to showing himself approved to God and somebody asked him at the end of his life he actually got asked this all the time Mueller what's the secret to your success?
How do you do so much? How do you accomplish so much? How do you care for so many people? And here he documents his response he says there was a day when I died utterly died died to George Mueller his opinions his preferences his tastes and his will died to the world its approval or censure died to the approval or blame of even my brothers and friends and since then I have studied only to show myself approved to God that's the secret if you want to be a Christian man or woman of God and a hero that's where it starts for him it started at 20 years old at a life group on a Saturday night and again the rest of his story is the fruit of that conversion we'll move to chapter 2

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of our story he was a man of prayer we'll call this immutability and prayer he did nothing without taking first his prayers to God and so you know when you're born into this world you have certain physical attributes certain physical affinities you don't know what that's are that's kind of the fun nature of growing up

I've got kids all the way from 2 in the home till 10 and they're figuring out I'm going to be tall or I'm going to be strong or I'm going to be wise or God may be making me rich you get to figure that out and for Mueller this is what's happening to him at 20 years old he's born again he gets all these new spiritual affinities and so he gets to say am I going to be generous or am I going to be hospitable am I going to be of service am I going to have a heart for the lost what am I like and he immediately gets given a burden for the lost after his conversion and he thinks he's being called to be a missionary he wants so bad to be a missionary and by the way he's 20 50 years before he actually gets to go and be a missionary and man is he a missionary and so again if you're going to be a missionary what do you have to do you got to get trained and so he goes to seminary and this is an important detail that you can remember he goes to seminary and stays at the free housing provided by the school which was an orphanage building that was built 100 years before by a man named Auguste Hermann Franck from his own Bristol remember that 1830 he's asked to pastor his first church in Tainmouth it's a tiny church 18 member church is his first church I looked it up on a map if you went due south of Bristol to the coast 91 miles you would end up in the sea town of Tainmouth and it was in the fall of that year at 24 years old he makes a few resolutions that are going to change the trajectory of his entire life the first resolution that he makes he says he vows never to take any money for any service rendered in the Lord for any reason ever including his own salary so the first step was he renounces his own salary and he puts a little box in the very back of the church that's voluntary offering so if you want to give some money to the pastor you want to give some bread or some food or some meat you could take it in that box and that was his whole living that October the same fall he gets married to a Miss Mary Groves and they read the words of Luke 12 33 sell your possessions give to the needy provide for yourselves money bags that do not grow old with a treasure in the heavens that do not fail where no thief approaches and no thief or no moth destroys and so they read that verse and they fall under conviction and they say we're going to take a lifelong vow of poverty we're going to be poor from this day forward so that was the second conviction that's how at the end of his life when his will is admitted to probate his entire personal property under oath including books and furniture and clothes was 169 pounds and this is also how [20:56] God taught him to rely on the Lord before he ever brought orphans into his care he's already training him to rely daily and hourly on provision from God I want you to hear some entries this is him speaking from his own journal this is June 12th 1831 yesterday passed away and no money came we had nine pence left that would be about seven dollars today this morning we were still waiting upon the Lord and looking for deliverance we only had a little butter left for breakfast after the morning meeting a brother opened the donation box and giving me as quite as unexpectedly the money at such a time he told me that he and his wife could not sleep last night on accounting of thinking that we might need money there was in it one pound eight shillings ten and one half pence our joy on account of this fresh deliverance was great and we praise the Lord heartily you skip ahead five weeks July 20th the same year he says a shoulder of mutton and a loaf were sent to us anonymously the truth is that while we have often been brought low yea so low that we have not even had as one single penny left or so much as to have the last loaf on the table and not as much money as was needed to buy another one yet never have we had to sit down to a meal without our good Lord having provided nourishing food for us

I'm bound to state this and I do it with pleasure my master has been a kind master to me and if I had to choose this day again as to the way of living the Lord giving me grace I would not choose differently so these episodes are training for service these episodes are the Lord teaching him daily to listen and to look to him for their provision and so he can write at the end of his life not once or five times or 500 times but thousands of times in these three score years have we had in hand not enough for one more meal in food or in funds but not once has God failed us nor once have we or the orphans gone hungry or lacked any good thing the very next year in 1832 on April 13th he would receive a stirring letter from Bristol asking if he would come and pastor in Bristol because there was a cholera outbreak and there would be even in the time and you know what it's like to live through a pandemic and so he's trying to start orphanages and care for hundreds and hundreds of children with a cholera outbreak but they're saying we need pastors most of all just to bury the

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bodies and to perform the services of all of these people and so he gets the letter on the 13th and guess you have a lot of freedom when you don't own anything he's not encumbered by anything so he gets the letter on the 13th and he's already living in Bristol on the 20th he's already moved up there he and his wife and they move there and they give birth to a little girl
Lydia on September 17th and this is an interesting aside and why we need heroes because Mueller reads in February of that year the biography of a man named Hermann Frank and how he started his orphanages and then he would read three years later he goes to his sister's house for tea and he writes in his journal that he noticed she has the biography of Auguste Hermann Frank on her bookshelf and it catches his eye whose orphanage did he stay in when he was at seminary Auguste Hermann Frank's orphanage do you see how Providence works you see God telling him and guiding him and shepherding him and convicting his heart about what he was supposed to do and so you see Providence moving I want to say who was Hermann Frank he's one of my heroes and by the way he's the one who started it all he was there as one of the German pietists and he inspired Whitfield and Spurgeon and Mueller and Reed this is the OG orphan starter orphanage guy 1696 he starts the largest enterprise for the poor in the world at that time he fed he clad and he taught 2,000 orphans and so Mueller moves to Bristol he's overwhelmed with the need his wife his second wife is Susanna Mueller he has to bury his first wife you'll see that
Susanna Mueller writes a brief history of the life and labors of George Mueller you can read it in an hour it's very brief but she talks about in that biography kind of what it was like in Bristol and kind of the need that was present that was kind of weighing on the heart of Mueller I'll read her words to you she says children as young as four years old were working 16 hour days in factories and mines where they generally died by the age of 25 in 1834 all England could only accommodate about 3600 orphans and she says twice that number of children under the age of 8 were already in prison and 20% of children in London didn't have any schooling at all and so here's Mueller stretching his spiritual muscles falling under conviction about these things learning what he loves learning what he's supposed to do and he says what am I going to do to help and you can think to our own day to bring it into our own context you say well we don't have an orphan crisis we have an orphan crisis Lawton and Pot County are the worst the metros of Tulsa and Oklahoma City there are children sleeping in the shelters every night with no homes we have in my county we need 103 homes and so the need is there it's a crisis we don't talk about and so
Mueller is looking around at the same kind of crisis that we're looking around at and saying what can I do how can I help what are Jesus's words what can I do to serve you what would you have me to do for you he's stretching these muscles and with all this going on on November 20th 1835 he records in his journal that's when he records that he sees that book of Hermann Franck when he's drinking tea with his sister that's Providence and December 2nd just a few days later he takes the first step to open up an orphanage if you want to do if you want to start a great movement you got to start somewhere and so for him that somewhere was just publishing a bill to his town announcing a public meeting that he would like to start an orphan house so he put it out a week he put the bill out he picked a house he said I'd like to start an orphanage at number 6 Wilson Street and three days later while he's praying about establishing this work here's another verse I want you to write down Psalm 8110 what a verse to pattern your life after this changes everything for him
[27:07] Psalm 8110 I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt open thy mouth wide and I will fill it and so he puts down his Bible right there and he says Lord I'm opening my mouth wide please be pleased to fill it and that's amazing we took this with our elders on our pastor's retreat a few years ago based on this biography where are we limiting God where are we thinking so small when God's saying open your mouth and I will fill it that's a giving your life to something not a I'm hungry it's the same God who says I can bring honey from a rock which is also what Mueller lived by and so he gives this town hall meeting and he gives the town three reasons for the proposed house could you imagine this today having a town hall meeting and say there's three reasons I want to start an orphan house number one that God may be glorified number two that the welfare of orphans might be promoted number three that the good of orphans would be secure that was

December 2nd his first orphanage opens April 21st he opens the first one with already a plan to open up a second one this guy doesn't wait around he doesn't waste any time by the way he has no money whatsoever he has no savings he has nothing he has no emergency fund because he said there's no emergencies in God's economy there's no emergencies to God he says there's

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emergencies from our perspective but nothing catches God off guard and so he says I can care for God or I can rely on God for emergencies just as much as I can rely on him for my daily bread so yes he's nothing as he goes to start these orphanages and he doesn't ever ask for help from any man because he believed that he could depend fully on God at every moment that's why he never fundraised Spurgeon used to print all the donors in his sword and trial magazine right and Mueller's like I don't I can trust God I don't need to do anything like that so his biographer is named Pearson and I encourage you all to read it it's incredible biography he comments on Mueller's dependence on the immutability of God saying he longed to have some visible proof to point to that the heavenly father is the same faithful promiser and provider as ever and is willing to prove himself the living God to all who put their trust in him so Mueller says it's not even that God's immutable in that he will provide he says God's immutable as to how he will provide how is God pleased to provide for his church and his kingdom he uses the widow's might he uses widows and so he comes and there's one of the first givers to fund the orphanages was a poor needle woman who gave the surprising gift of a hundred pounds which if you looked at today's dollars would be about twenty three thousand dollars and you go to you look at Spurgeon
Stockwell orphanage it was a widow who came to Spurgeon and said nobody knows these people have money nobody knows these widows have money and she says we need to start an orphanage and ironically Spurgeon says we need to give this money to Mueller because that dude knows how to start orphanages I could say even in our own church we had a widow who nobody knew this widow had a dime and she came in secret and said I want to send eight missionaries from our church this year to North Africa to start a church planning movement would it be okay if I paid for all of it to which we said that would be fine it's the widow's might is how the Lord is pleased to begin these movements like this and so his plan is successful it comes time for applications and to enroll orphans and when the day comes nobody shows up not a single orphan comes to the house what did he forget he didn't pray for orphans and he's like hits himself on the head he's like I prayed for furniture I prayed for laborers I prayed for the workforce I prayed for the funds
I prayed for the building I forgot to pray for the kids and so he gathers the whole staff and they all get on their knees and they pray and of course the very next day these little girls start to come in one after another the first orphanages were for girls 30 girls filled the house he opens the second house that was number 6 he opens number 1 on the same street I want to pause and say at this point Mueller is 32 years old and at this point his church in Bristol has grown from a congregation of 50 to over 400 people 170 people have been converted under his preaching ministry which was an expository preaching ministry and in addition to the orphans he's opened up four day schools for poor children already and he's already raised money and distributed 4,000 Bibles globally and it goes on the second house is opened in April and by October he's got the funding to open a third house on the same street which if you're a neighbor you don't appreciate that so the neighbors are getting frustrated and the complaints are coming in and the plumbing issues are starting to cause plumbing issues at the surrounding houses and we'll use this as an introduction to the third chapter of the evening we'll call it immutability and testing because if you read the biographers if you read the books they would say he came into the darkest time of his ministry they call it the hour of testing we'll call it immutability and testing he says money ran so low in the late 1830s that he was having to rely on God not only daily anymore but hourly and he and his family would sit down with these hundred orphans to eat dinner and there would be no dinner and yet he said we never went without food you know the story and so you have to read the biography for yourself to get impressed with the sheer volume of times that the
Lord provides for Mueller and his family and these kids there's a story from February 7th 1839 he writes in his journal there was no money in hand I was waiting upon God I asked him repeatedly but no supplies came brother T called between 11 and 12 o'clock to tell me that about one pound two shillings would be needed to take in bread for the three houses but we only had two shillings nine pence and he goes and he preaches he gets that news and then he goes and he preaches on Matthew 6 26 therefore I tell you do not be anxious about your life what you will eat or what you will drink or what you will put on is not life more than food and is not the body more than clothing and he leaves that prayer meeting and he goes to the girls orphanage and there's a box from a town called Barnstaple and he opens it and he says it had been prepaid a letter and with it eight pounds for the orphans and he says praise God he said if it had not been prepaid I didn't even have the money to accept the gift and to pay the postage for the gift so he said

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[33:48] God didn't even overlook the detail that I needed the postage as well as the money and the letter and the stories became legendary some of the stories were legendary he says there's a milk cart that was going by when the children needed breakfast and it broke down and the milk guy said do you guys need this milk for your orphans and in the same way a baker comes and he says I was compelled my wife and I couldn't sleep last night because we were compelled to bake bread for the children would it be bringing bread when there was none and they talked to these donors and everybody that brought the funds the one common thread was it was divine compulsion they all say we were prompted to do this if not compelled to do this that was the story over and over to bring these resources to fund the orphans another story from Mueller he says having not one cent in hand a gentleman and some ladies visited the orphan house one of the ladies said of course you cannot carry on these institutions without a good stock of funds and the gentleman stopped and asked have you a good stock Mueller's reply our funds are deposited in a bank which cannot break the reply drew tears from the eyes of the lady and she gave the gift of five pounds from the pocket of the gentleman which was timely as they had not one penny in hand

Mueller's biographer says a single case of such answered prayer might be accounted accidental but the coincidences of both are too many and too exact to admit the doctrine of chance we're compelled not to say justified to conclude that the only sufficient and reasonable explanation must be found in a God who hears and answers prayers it continues whose fluctuations in income and apparent prosperity did not take him by surprise he expected them for if there were not crises and critical emergencies how could there be critical deliverances his trust was in a God not in donors or friends or worldly circumstances and because he trusted in the living God who says of himself I am the Lord I change not among all other changes his feet were upon the one rock of ages that no earthquake shock can move from its eternal foundation his life was built on the immutability of God and he had quite the effect on the world he became legend and people looked forward to his reports and his writings and to hear about how the orphans were doing and there was a man who reads one of these reports and he's convicted because his sister is wealthy he says she's got all these jewels and gems and trinkets and he shows her he says the eternal uselessness of such trinkets those were his words and so he comes to
Mueller with a bag of jewels literally but he says before he gave it away he took the most beautiful diamond ring and he wrote on his window pane Jehovah Jireh that comes from Genesis 22 and it translates the Lord will provide and then he gives all that he had to Mueller to fund his ministry I want to share just to give you an impression of the kind of things he wrote about and what his life was like this is just a typical set of his journal entries these are just the entries through July of 1835 he says this morning while sitting in my room the distress of several brethren and sisters was brought to my mind and I said to myself oh that it might please the Lord to give me some means to help them about an hour afterwards I received 60 pounds from a brother whom I've never seen and who lived then as he does still at a distance of several thousand miles away this shows how the Lord can provide in any way for his people and that he's not confined to places July 3rd our taxes are due and may be called for any day and for the first time we have no money to pay them as we were obliged on account of our late afflictions to spend the money which we had put by for them may the
Lord in his mercy provide July 6th I was enabled today by the freewill offerings through the boxes and by what I had left to pay the taxes before they were called how kind of the Lord to answer my prayer so soon July 8th this evening I had five pounds sent from Somerset England so the Lord has appeared again may I praise his holy name for his seasonable help which came when I scarcely had any money left July 14th today I had again a new set of clothes given to me by a brother mine were much old and worn and our late funeral might have given a second reason to have new ones but I did not order any because I had no money to pay for them and I thought it wrong to contract debts a fresh paper was brought in for taxes today which ought have been asked for many months since. May the Lord give us means to pay them. July 22nd, the last mentioned taxes were called for this morning just after the Lord had sent us five pounds from a distance of about 80 miles. So the Lord has of late repeatedly in answer to prayer sent help. May this lead us to trust in him for the future. And so this relying on God and seeing his provision over and over and over led him to have an application of Hebrews 13.8. The Lord is the same yesterday and today and forever. Jesus Christ, his application was that he began to pray as if he had already received the prayer that he was praying for. So he began to pray to the Lord, not having any food. Thank you, Lord, for

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providing all the food that we need for these orphans in this moment.
Because he knew that God was going to provide these things. He prayed as if they were already answered because the Lord's name is Jehovah Jireh. He's the Lord who provides and he knew that. [39:06] So in his hour of testing, he teaches you how to be faithful in your trials. And so when you come to have no money, you can think back and say, well, there's a lot of times George Mueller had no money and he delivered him. And because of the immutability of God, we can say he's the same yesterday and today and forever. He loves me and I love him and he will care for me as well.

He passed his tests. And it might seem easy to say, well, it'd be nice to be George Mueller. It'd be so easy to rely on God if he just showed up at every meal like that. But that's not how it always was for Mueller. It wasn't that the providence of God was always sweet. Sometimes God's providence for him was very bitter. And so two of his children with Miss Mary Groves were stillborn. He had to bury his infant son, Elijah, who died at one year old. He had several significant periods of poor health or some where he didn't think he was going to make it. He had to bury his first wife, Mrs. Mary Groves.
And he preached the service and the service was on Psalm 119.68, thou art good and doest good. So he buried his wife preaching about the goodness and mercy of God. He buried his daughter, Lydia Wright.
He buried his second wife, Susanna Mueller, who died in his late age. And so he knows what it means to live the evening of your life alone. And then there was the financial straits and the plumbing issues and the complaints of the neighbors. Even though he's doing pouring himself out for the sake of the gospel, there's complaints. And even in the hour of testing, he's tempted with the way out to break his oaths. There was a donor who came and said, I will give you all the money you could ever need for your orphanage if you would just put my name on the front of the building. And I love Mueller's response. He said, God is the only patron of these orphans. There's only one person's name who gets attached to this building and these orphans and it's God's. He says that when people look at this, this is a theater for the immutability of God. So when people look at this, they're supposed to say, look what God is doing, not look what wealthy donors did. And so he told the guy to suck an egg. He said, no, we're not putting your name on the building. And you can feel the stress. In 1843, there's a wait list of 483 children to his homes. And he's feeling the burden. I have to do something. I have the means to do something. And so he makes the plans for a fourth orphan house, but the neighbors step in and the neighbors begin to complain. And Mueller reads and is reminded about Christ's golden rule from Luke 631. It says, and as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. And so he says,
I have to be a good neighbor to these neighbors. And so he changes his prayer from instead of getting more houses on Wilson Street, he says, Lord, give me somewhere else where I won't be a nuisance as I do your work. And he changes his prayers. And there's an argument that he has as he considers this that was very weighty for him. He says, a lot of ground spacious enough are going to cost at the outset thousands of pounds. But listen, he said, why should this daunt a true child of God whose father is infinitely rich? We know who owns the heavenly treasury. We know who brings money into our bank accounts. We know where that comes from. He knew that God. And so this would be the first thoughts of the greatest work he would be remembered by, the orphan complex at Ashley Down. And Providence pointed the way. If you want to know, you know, was God behind this movement? Just look at some of the things that were happening. There was a Christian architect in London who voluntarily offered not only to draw up all the plans for the orphanage, but to oversee the construction of it, which is incredible. And so you may say the same thing. If you're, I'm just a project, what can I do for orphans? I'm just a project manager. Well, there you go. There was a, there was an outlet. What, I'm just an architect. What can I do for orphans? He drafted the plans for all of Ashley Down. Unprompted and unasked for the gifts began to come in large and small for him to pay for this first building. And his eyes come upon a piece of land that he says was perfect, singularly suited for his needs was his quote.
[43:15] And so he calls the owner twice trying to get to it before anybody else did. And the owner didn't answer. And so I think what we would do, what I would do is if you call twice and the owner doesn't answer, then you show up, right? Because you don't want anybody else to get your land. And so you, you find it, he says, no, I called twice. He didn't answer. So obviously it was God's will that I not talk to the owner that day. He says, I'll call again in the morning. He calls again in the morning and the owner says he couldn't sleep that night thinking about the land, thinking that if Mr.

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Mueller called, he was going to offer the land to him at 120 pounds an acre instead of the 200 pounds that it had cost the day before. So Mueller being faithful, listening to the will of God and his Providence saved himself. He got the land at almost half price. He purchases it, purchases it. He patiently waits for the Lord to bring the money. He doesn't go into any debt as was his custom. And he gets this, this gorgeous house, 300 massive windows and 330 orphans move in. And with the construction of his first building at Ashley Down, we'll shift to the last chapter of his story.

We'll call this immutability and legacy. Immutability and legacy. As the years go by, again, his legacy goes out. You have Spurgeon when money comes for an orphanage. He's like, we got it. Let's consider Mueller. Have you heard about this Mueller guy?

The stories were out there. As the years goes on, he builds another orphan house in Ashley Down in 1857 and another in 1862 and another in 1868 and another in 1870. Five massive structures which over the course of his ministry would house 10,024 orphans.

And this wasn't just a conveyor belt where they come in and then they get shifted through and then they graduate. They were family. They were his kids. And you read the reports of people that talked about him. They said he was such a softy, he couldn't bear to hear them cry. And he would run over and pick them up. And they were spoiled kids. This report says in the nursery, the infant children have books and play things to occupy and amuse them. And they're the objects of tender maternal care.

And he didn't separate the family. Several children are often admitted to the orphanage from one family in order to avoid needless breaking of household ties by separation. The average term of residence is about 10 years, though some orphans have been here for 17. And it wasn't like he lived over here and he would wake up in the morning and drive his car over to the orphanage. He lived with the orphans.

[45:53] This was his family. He lived at number three house at Ashley Down. His home was their home. He lived and died in the number three house. And church leaders, you can take some of this wisdom about his legacy and remember it. He got some criticism saying, you're building all these buildings. What comes of it in the future? What's going to happen after you die and all these buildings are vacated and empty? Or what are, what's going to happen to him? And his answer is so wise. He said, my business is with all my might to serve my own generation by the will of God. And in so doing, I shall best serve the next generation should the Lord Jesus tarry. He says, we're not going to not build and not create budgets and not expand the kingdom of God because of what the next generation might or might not do. He says, the best way to serve that generation is to serve this generation with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And in doing that, we will serve the next generation. And how wise, what an amazing perspective. So for lack of time, we can't talk about all the fruitful labor at Ashley Down. We can't talk about at 70 years old that he became a missionary and traveled 200,000 miles, all the adventure that he came to with that. But we have to fast forward to his death, March 10th, 1898. A worker comes in to bring him his morning tea. She did every morning. That was his custom. And she finds him on the floor, passed away in his room. He asked for a glass of milk and a biscuit the night before and had fainted over them and fallen onto the floor. His old biography, Fred Warren's writes, George Mueller had passed suddenly into a life beyond a poor man. He passed as one who had experienced the unchanging faithfulness of God.

Mueller estimated in his lifetime that God answered 50,000 of his prayers. And he said many thousands of those were answered before he even opened his eyes. While he was still praying, they were answered.

He said many others lingered for decades. When he died, there was a brief service held for him in his home in the chapel of number three orphan at Ashley Down. A thousand orphan children came to pay their respects to the only earthly father they ever knew. His son-in-law preached his funeral message, Hebrews 13, 8, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever.

So these are the stories that make me love church history. I hope these are the stories that make you love church history. You can kind of read them and you get lost in them. It's heroic history and it's full of God's providence. And so Pearson anticipates your response to this story. He says, you're going to say, I can't live a life like that. And you're going to say, I'm not a Christian hero with faith like that. And he answers your doubts. He says, to say, therefore, I'm not called to build orphan houses and I have no right to expect answers to my prayers as Mr. Mueller did is wrong and unbelieving.

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Every child of God is first to get into the sphere appointed of God for him and there exercise full trust and live by faith upon God's sure word of promise. He keeps going saying, it's impossible to set limits to the experience of any believer who casts himself wholly on God, surrenders himself wholly to God and cherishes deep love for his word and holy intimacy with himself. That's true for you. Mueller believed in the immutability of God, that he was the same yesterday and today and forever, and he built his life on it. His biographer, again, the great fundamental truth that this heroic man stamped on his generation was that the living God is the same today and forever as yesterday and in all ages past, and that with equal confidence with the most trustful souls of any age, we may believe his word and add every promise to it. Amen. Let it be so. And if you believe that, that God is the same yesterday and today and forever, then you search your own heart and you say, well, what is God calling you to do?
[49:56] Where is providence guiding you? Where are your talents drawing you? What is your heart and your passion burned for? What gifts of service do you have? And you can build your life on this verse, and I hope that you do. Hebrews 13.8, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever. Build your life on Psalm 81.10. Open your mouth wide and he will fill it. And I leave you with the words that Mueller left in his last published report on page 66. He writes, the primary object I had in view and carry on, carrying on all this work was that it might be seen now in the 19th century. God is still the living God. And that now, as well as thousands of years ago, he listens to the prayers of his children and helps those who trust in him. Let's pray to that God. Lord, I thank you for the service that all of the people in this room have done. We pray, Lord, as Mueller did, looking back, looking forward, knowing that faithful ministry is going to come. I pray that they would have the faith, faith like Mueller, faith like the Hall of Fame of Hebrews 13, where they would trust you enough to go and do great things, that they wouldn't limit you, that they would open their mouth wide because you are Jehovah Jireh. You are the God who provides. You are the God of Psalms 81.10. You are pleased to do amazing things for those who have amazing faith, who pray great things. And so, Lord, I pray over this body, these students who are in such a place, hearing this good theology at such an early age. Lord, I'm admittedly jealous of how much they know and how big their hearts are. And so, Lord, I pray that you use it.

Help them to see what sphere of influence you've given them and to be faithful to walk into it. I pray that you use the rest of this week, all the knowledge that they've gained, that they wouldn't just build an intellectual definitions of your attributes, God, but that they would be faithful to build their life on it because you are faithful. You are a wonderful framework to build a life on.
Lord, you are so good to us. We love you. Thank you for tonight. Thank you for this camp. We ask all this in Christ's name. Amen.

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