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Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. In that day you will say: Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you. God can command it because He gives it. If I wanted the answer to that question, Are you joyful, is your overall demeanour, one of joy? So, on Joy Sunday, I do. Now, many confuse joy with happiness. Are joy and happiness the same thing? How are they different? How does the Bible delineate the differences between joy and happiness? I think most people would agree that happiness is a goal. The truth is the Bible never promises happiness, however it does promise joy. There is a difference. Not so with joy. As I have said, you can be happy and have joy but happiness is dependent upon circumstances; joy is not. Jesus promises the disciples that their joy will be full or complete. Filling a glass of water to the brim makes it full or complete. Jesus went to the cross to make sure that joy would be complete. That is a permanent possession, not a fleeting moment like happiness is. I have often presided over funerals where sorrow and joy were felt at the same time. The departed is born again and we are joyful knowing where she is, but we are all still sorrowful about losing her. Happiness is not much help under these circumstances but joy is! And even though mixed with grief, or illness, or marriage breakdown, or disease, or death itself Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation Are you joyful You see, while this joy is our "birth right" through Christ Well, you know if joy describes your life right now Sometimes they even ask how it is that you feel the way you do. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, If you have this joy, you know it Paul in Romans reminds us that the kingdom of God is This is what David prayed on another occasion: Continue to Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you Amen.

Chapter 2 : LivePrayer | Sermon Plain Gospel For Plain People

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Their horsemanship, buffalo hunting, tipis, and warbonnets are the most commonly represented symbols from Indian history. Some people think that all Native Americans looked and lived like the Plains Indians. Some people even think that modern Indians still dress and act like the Plains Indians. As this book shows, there was and is a great variety to Native American culture, and it is difficult to generalize about the many different nations. But why are the Plains Indians, of all the Native Americans, so famous? One reason is that many of the Plains tribes retained their original way of life longer than most other Native peoples, through most of the 19th century. Most of the final wave of Indian wars involved the Plains tribes. This is a period of American history re-created time and again in books, movies, and television shows. The Indian fighters of that period captured the national imagination then, as they still do today, for their bravery, skill, and resourcefulness. Moreover, there is something especially romantic about the Plains way of life—freedom of movement and independence on the open range, plus colorful clothing and homes—that still strikes a chord in us. Who exactly were the Plains Indians? What and where are the plains? This region, as defined by scholars, extends over a vast area: Most of the country in this region is treeless grassland. There are two types of grasslands: In the Mississippi Valley region, where there is significant rainfall—about 20 to 40 inches—is found tall grass. These are sometimes called the Prairie Plains, or simply the prairies. To the west, where there is less rain—about 10 to 20 inches—is found short grass. This country is known as the Great Plains, the High Plains, or simply the plains. The flat or rolling grasslands are interrupted in places by stands of trees, especially willows and cottonwoods along the numerous rivers flowing eastward into the Missouri and the Mississippi. In some locations, highlands rise up from the plains: These mountains, hills, plateaus, and buttes are often dotted by pine trees. Yet what is remarkable about the plains is the sameness—an enormous ocean of grass stretching over thousands of miles. Many different kinds of animals, both large and small, lived on these grasslands, including antelope, deer, elk, bears, wolves, coyotes, and rabbits. The environment was especially suitable to one grazing animal: The buffalo was central to the Plains Indian economy, providing meat for food, as well as hides, bones, and horns for shelter, clothing, and tools. The Great Plains Culture Area is different from other culture areas in that the dominant Native American way of life evolved only after the arrival of Europeans. What made the nomadic buffalo-hunting life possible was the horse, which was first brought to North America by the Spanish in the s. And Plains tribes acquired use of the animal in the early to mids. Tribes with horses were no longer dependent on farming along the fertile river valleys to supply enough food for their people. Hunters could now range over a wide area in search of the great buffalo herds, carrying their possessions with them. Portable tipis of poles and buffalo hide proved practical for life on the trail. Not all tribes completely abandoned their permanent villages of earth or grass lodges and their farming. But with horses, hunters could leave the villages for longer periods on wide-ranging expeditions. Many different peoples adopted the new nomadic way of life, migrating onto the plains from different directions. Entire families traveled together. Many of these peoples were being pushed from their ancestral homelands by non-Indian settlers or by eastern tribes armed with guns acquired from fur traders. Once on the plains, the varying tribes began sharing other customs besides horses, buffalo-hunting, and tipis. They passed on religious rituals and methods of warfare. In order to communicate with one another for purposes of council or trade, Plains Indians also devised a language of the hands. In this shared sign language, each tribe had its own gesture for identification. Ancient Indians once had lived on the Great Plains. But it is thought they left the region in the 13th century, probably because of drought. The earliest inhabitants in the region after that time might have been the early agricultural tribes of the Missouri River valley: It is thought that there were only two nonfarming tribes on the Great Plains before But during the s and s, other tribes came to the region: Plains tribes actually consisted of bands of related families. Each band had a few hundred members. The bands

lived apart most of the year, but gathered in the summer for communal buffalo hunts and religious rituals. Some books make a distinction between the tribes of the tall-grass prairies and those of the short-grass high plains, since many of the former had permanent villages and continued farming part of the year, while the more western peoples set up only temporary camps and gave up farming altogether. Plains Culture on Pinterest.

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Thus they are sometimes called "House Amish. In addition, the early Anabaptists, from whom the Amish are descended, were religiously persecuted, and it may have been safer to pray in the privacy of a home. Each congregation is made up of 25-30 neighboring farm or related families whose membership in the congregation in which their farm is located is the only congregation available for membership. Accordingly, each member is also a neighbor. There is no "church hopping" from church to church like modern Protestant churches, and relationships are assumed to be long-term. With long-term neighbor relationships as the norm, extending over time to include multiple generations as members, the implications have major impacts on relationships. Conflict resolution, gossip, grudges, neighborliness, all work to cement relationships vastly different than the socially mobile Protestant church culture. Each member family rotates as host so that each year each member family serves as host. This practice conforms to the Biblical teaching to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is. In intervening weeks, time is available to visit a Sunday with family, neighbors, and friends in and outside the congregation of their residence and membership. Congregation leaders meet with other congregation leaders within the same district from time to time and compare needs, problems, teachings, etc. Gelassenheit is perhaps better understood as a reluctance to be forward, to be self-promoting, or to assert oneself. The Amish anti-individualist orientation is the motive for rejecting labor-saving technologies that might make one less dependent on the community. Modern innovations like electricity might spark a competition for status goods, or photographs might cultivate personal vanity. Separation from the world[edit] The Amish consider the Bible a trustworthy guide for living but do not quote it excessively. To do so would be considered a sinful showing of pride. The Amish are ambivalent about both the consequences of this contact and the commoditization of their culture. The decorative arts play little role in authentic Amish life though the prized Amish quilts are a genuine cultural inheritance, unlike hex signs , and are in fact regarded with suspicion, as a field where egotism and a display of vanity can easily develop. Amish lifestyles vary between, and sometimes within, communities. These differences range from profound to minuscule. Some of the more liberal Beachy Amish congregations, which permit automobiles, may mandate that automobiles be painted black. In some communities, various Old Order groups may vary over the type of suspenders males are required to wear, if any, or how many pleats there should be in a bonnet, or if one should wear a bonnet at all. Groups in fellowship can intermarry and have communion with one another, an important consideration for avoiding problems that may result from genetically closed populations. Thus minor disagreements within communities, or within districts, over dairy equipment or telephones in workshops may or may not splinter churches or divide multiple communities. In Beachy Amish settings, the use of English in church is the norm, but with some families continuing to use Pennsylvania German, or a variety of Swiss German, at home. Shunning[edit] Members who break church rules may be called to confess before the congregation. Those who will not correct their behavior are excommunicated. Excommunicated members are shunned to shame the individual into returning to the church. Members may interact with and even help a shunned person, but may not accept anything, like a handshake, payment, or automobile ride, directly from the wayward person. Some communities have split in the last century over how they apply this practice of "Meidung". This form of discipline is recommended by the bishop after a long process of working with the individual and must be unanimously approved by the congregation. A page from a Germantown, Pennsylvanian edition of the Ausbund , the standard Amish hymnal first published in The Ausbund provides texts, but not tunes; melodies are those of songs popular when the book first appeared. Hymns are sung without instrumentation and extremely slowly, taking up to fifteen minutes. Communion is only held open to those who have been baptized. As with regular services, the men and women sit separately. They and other Anabaptists do not accept that a child can be meaningfully baptized. Their children are expected to follow the will of their parents on all issues, but when they come of

age, they must choose to make an adult, permanent commitment to God and the community. Those who come to be baptized sit with one hand over their face, representing humility and submission to the church. Can you renounce the devil, the world, and your own flesh and blood? Can you commit yourself to Christ and His church, and to abide by it and therein to live and to die? And in all order Ordnung of the church, according to the word of the Lord, to be obedient and submissive to it and to help therein? Then the bishop blesses the young men and greets them into the fellowship of the church with a holy kiss. Since the church leaders only perform weddings for members, baptism is an incentive for young couples with romantic ties, funneling them toward the church. Girls tend to join at an earlier age than boys. About five or six months before the ceremony, classes are held to instruct the candidates, teaching them the strict implications of what they are about to profess. The Saturday before baptism, they are given their last chance to withdraw. The difficulty of walking the narrow path is emphasized, and the applicants are instructed it is better not to vow than to make the vow and break it later on. Those who choose to not join can continue to relate freely with their friends and family. Church growth occurs through having large families and by retaining those children as part of the community. The Old Order Amish do not proselytize, as a rule. Conversion to the Amish faith is rare but does occasionally occur as in the case of historian David Luthy. Stones are plain and small. Funeral practices vary across Amish settlements. But all of them reflect the core Amish values of simplicity, humility, and mutual aid. Instead of referring to the deceased with stories of his life, and eulogizing him, services tend to focus on the creation story and biblical accounts of resurrection. The same is true of other, smaller communities that have their roots in these two counties. The Amish usually, but not always, choose Amish cemeteries, and purchase gravestones that are uniform, modest, and plain; in recent years, these have been inscribed in English. The bodies of both men and women are dressed in white clothing by family members of the same sex, with women in the white cape and apron of their wedding outfit.

Chapter 4 : Plain News - Filtered News for Plain People

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It is not in Heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the Word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it. Indeed, the Law itself was given primarily to drive men to the Gospel. It was meant to show them the impossibility of salvation by their own works and so to shut them up to a salvation which is available even for sinners. The types of sacrifice and purification pointed to the method of pardon for the guilty by faith and acceptance for sinners by a righteousness not their own. This is certainly one of the passages in which Moses wrote of the Savior yet to come. We are not, however, left to conjecture this, for the Apostle Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has quoted this passage in the 10th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He has given us a sort of paraphrase of it, not quoting it with verbal exactness, but giving its sense and then inserting his own interpretation of that sense which interpretation, seeing that he spoke under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, may be accepted as decisive. I believe, however, that Moses did intend that which Paul attributes to him and that he saw in the whole Revelation of God under the ancient dispensation, the spirit, the essential spirit of the Gospel which was more fully declared to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. In this instance he was not speaking of the Law as given upon Sinai, if we view it as a Covenant of Works. I showed you this by reading the first verse of the 29th chapter which is the preface to the passage now before us. There we read, "These are the words of the Covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the Covenant which He made with them in Horeb. What is meant by these words is this—that the way of salvation is plain and clear—it is not concealed among the mysteries of Heaven. We can speak it with our mouths and enjoy it with our hearts. It is a household treasure, not a foreign rarity! It is not so remote from us that only they can know it who travel far to make discoveries. Neither is it so sublimely difficult that only they can grasp it who have soared to Heaven and ransacked the secrets of the Book sealed with seven seals. It is brought to our doors like the manna and flows at our feet like the water from the Rock. It is, as Moses says, "very near to us. You have neither to look skyward nor seaward to find it—here it is before you—as near as your tongue, inseparable from you as your heart! You have neither to rise to the sublime, nor sink to the profound—it lies before you an open secret. As says Moses in the last verse of the previous chapter—"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: When God speaks to a man with a view to his salvation, it is but natural that in His wisdom He should so speak as to be understood! No doubt some men have obtained a reputation for wisdom because they have not been understood, but this was fictitious and unworthy of true men. If they had possessed the highest wisdom, they would have aimed at making matters clear when their objective was to instruct. As a general rule, when a speaker is not clear to his hearers it is because the thought is not clear to himself. This can never be supposed of Him who knows all things and sees all things as they are. The only wise God abounds to us in all wisdom and prudence in His manner of imparting to us the knowledge of His will! Teaching, He does teach and explaining, He does clearly explain. There may be and there is, a sinful dullness in the minds of sinful men, but there is no such obscurity in the Revelation, itself, as to excuse men for this blindness. God, who is infinitely wise, would not give to us a Revelation upon the vital point of salvation and then leave it so much in the dark that it was impossible for common minds to comprehend it if they desired to do so! God adapts means to ends and does not allow men to miss Heaven from lack of plainness on His part! We expect a plain and simple Revelation because God has made a Revelation perfectly adapted for its end, upon which no improvement can be made. You must have noticed that when an invention first comes before the public eye, it is almost always complicated. And the reason for this lies in the fact that it is, as yet, in its infancy. As the invention is improved, it is simplified. Almost every alteration in a piece of machinery which goes towards its perfecting—goes, also, towards making it more simple and, at the last, when the invention is complete, it is singularly simple. That which comes from

the mind of God, being perfect, goes directly towards its desired end! I admit that certain parts of the Divine Revelation are hard to be understood, but these are intended for our education, that we may exercise our minds and thoughts and may, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, thereby grow. But in the matter of salvation, where the life or death of a soul is concerned, it is necessary that the vision should be plain and our wise and gracious Lord has condescended to that necessity. In all that concerns repentance, faith and the vital matters of pardon and justification, there is no obscurity, but all is plain as a pikestaff! He that runs may read and he that reads may run. You might have expected this from God because of His gracious condescension. He makes the way so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein! He breaks down His great thoughts to our narrow capacities—He has compassion on the ignorant and He becomes the Teacher of babes. Truly the knowledge which the Lord our God imparts to us is, in itself, sublime, but His manner of teaching is gentle, for He comes with precept upon precept and line upon line, here a little and there a little. He does not come down to us half-way, but He stoops to men of low estate and while He hides these things from the wise and prudent, He reveals them unto babes. The pride of intellect He hates as much as any other pride. No flesh shall glory in His Presence. He takes the proud in their own craftiness, while He lifts up the humble and the meek. Therefore, we may expect that He will speak in terms that shall be open to shepherds and fishermen, whom others call unlearned and ignorant men, lest the wise men of this world should exalt themselves over the humbler sort. It is no design of the Lord God Almighty that a class of self-constituted superior persons should monopolize the blessings of the Gospel through the Truths of Revelation being wrapped up in learned terms which the vulgar cannot understand! The various systems of idolatry endeavored to surround their false teaching with a mystic secrecy, but the Word of our God is a revealer of things hidden from the foundation of the earth. We may be sure that when God deals with men, He will do nothing which shall cause human wisdom to boast itself. None shall glory that, after all, their culture was the one thing necessary to make the Gospel of God effectual. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. God aims distinctly by the Gospel at the salvation of men. He bids us preach the Gospel to every creature. It has need to be a simple Gospel if it is to be preached to every creature! I thank God with all my heart that the sage is here put on a level with the child, for the Gospel must be received by him as a little child receives it! If the Grace of God is given to the least educated person in yonder village, he is as well able to receive the Gospel as the most profound scholar in the university. Would any of you wish to have it otherwise? Could you be so inhuman? Must the Gospel also be enclosed for an aristocracy? Must the cultured few be gratified at the expense of the ruin of the masses? But it must be so unless the saving doctrine of the Gospel can be perceived by the untutored many. Every generous heart delights to think that "the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. From morning to night their hands are going to earn the bread that perishes. Their thoughts must largely be taken up with their daily toil. I grant you that many are too much engrossed with the poor cares of common life, but still, to a large extent they will, by necessary occupations, be shut out from close study and steady thought—so they must have a salvation which can be grasped at once and held without the strain of perpetual debate. If men cannot be saved without weeks and months of careful study, they will certainly be lost! As good have no salvation as one which is beyond ordinary comprehension! Our working men need a Gospel which can be heard and thought upon while they earn their daily bread. It should be clear as the sun and simple as A B C that they may see it and then hold it in their memories. The mass of our fellow men are not only very busy, but from their poverty and other surroundings they never will attain to any high degree of education. We are thankful for all that is done by School Boards and other agencies, but these operate for the present world rather than for eternal and spiritual things. Men may learn all that books can teach them and not be a jot nearer the knowledge of heavenly Truths of God. Heavenly knowledge is of another sort and is open to those who gain no certificates and pass no standards. Those who truly know their Bibles and find, therein, the appointed Savior, have not reached that point by the learning of the schools! Yet we may say of each one of them, "Blessed are you; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but My Father which is in Heaven. Moreover, we might expect the Gospel to be very plain because of the many feeble minds which otherwise

would be unable to receive it. How glad we are that our boys and girls can know and receive the Savior who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me and forbid them not"! If, in order to their salvation, our children must all be learned divines. If they must understand the discussions of our monthly and fortnightly reviews before they can know the Lord, they are, indeed, in an evil case. Then might we close our Sunday schools, being convinced that the children must perish, or at least must wait until they reach a riper age! Would you have it so? O Sirs, I am sure you would not! Rather would you help to gather in the lambs. Remember, also, that many return to feebleness of mind in their old age. How many who displayed considerable strength of intellect in middle life find their faculties failing them as their years multiply! We need a Gospel which an old man can grasp when sight and hearing are failing him, when the memory is weakened and the judgment is enfeebled. We need a Gospel which can be laid hold upon in second childhood, otherwise our venerable sires will miss the staff on which they have leaned so long—and other aged persons who have reached the 11th hour without faith in Jesus must be abandoned in despair! There is not one among us that would so desire it! Remember, once more, the many feeble intellects which are to be found on all hands—not imbecile, but still not intellectual.

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