

# Heroes of the Faith - Cranmer

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 24 June 2015

Preacher: Rhys Bezzant

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Joining us on the third of these introductions to Heroes of the Faith from the Reformation. This season, these last few weeks, we've met Martin Luther and John Calvin in Germany and French-speaking Europe, respectively.
- Tonight we meet one of the great reformers in England in the 16th century, Thomas Cranmer. As you'll see on the handout, I've named, or subtitled at least, Thomas Cranmer as the Conflicted Archbishop.
- This talk is particularly helpful to you if you're working out why you should be an Anglican or what it means to belong to an Anglican church. This talk is particularly helpful if you're thinking about politics and Christians' responsibilities to society.
- So let me pray for us, and then I'll read from the Scriptures. Our gracious Lord Jesus, we pray now you'd turn our hearts and minds towards you.
- Please fill them with your beauty, your truth, your glory, your love, that we might see ourselves and these heroes whom we meet as people being used by you as an instrument, but people pointing away from themselves to your grace and mercy.
- [ 1 : 3 9 ]     So I thank you for this church, and I thank you for these, my brothers and sisters, and I thank you for this opportunity to talk and to listen, ultimately to learn.
- for we pray it in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen. Well, I'm reading from 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 13 and 17.
- Peter's writing to a church that was being persecuted. 1 Peter's writing to a church.
- 1 Peter's writing to a church that was being persecuted. Submit yourselves, for the Lord's sake, to every human authority, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority, or to governors who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.
- For it's God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but don't use your freedom as a cover-up for evil.
- [ 2 : 4 8 ]     Live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God.
- Honor the emperor. In the ancient world, it was assumed if you were a believer, if you were a Christian, perhaps if you were a Jew, that it was very difficult to worship God and serve the government because the government was pagan and it seemed like it was a mile apart from your beliefs as someone who believed in the one true and living God.
- The assumption in the ancient world was that it was very difficult for Christians or Jews, monotheists, to serve their government because their government worshipped pagan gods.
- So it's quite remarkable here, isn't it, that Peter reminds his readers who themselves are being persecuted that they should submit themselves to every human authority, whether to the emperor as a supreme authority or to governors who were sent by him to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right.

Peter's saying, you Christian believers should submit to the pagan emperor. And even though, potentially, this emperor or his governors might persecute you, you still have a duty to submit.

[ 4 : 33 ] Look at that verse 17. Show proper respect to everyone. That's the big category. Love the family of believers.

Fear God. Honor the emperor. Fearing God and honoring the emperor are next to each other. It seems like it's perfectly possible to do both at once.

In fact, we could ask the question, why does Peter leave the phrase honor the emperor to last? Is that because honoring the emperor needs special emphasis in this list?

It comes after fear God honor the emperor. I'm going to sneeze, I'm sorry. Just when I was getting a head of steam up there.

Now, in our world, it's almost exactly the opposite.

[ 5 : 38 ] In our world, the assumption for Christians is that we will obey the government. We'll pay our taxes, as Paul in Romans 13 suggests.

We'll obey the road rules and so on. The assumption is that Christians by default will honor their government. And to resist our government, that needs extra justification.

We look at those Christians, whether rightly or wrongly, as perhaps pushing the limits when they go and do a sit-in in a government minister's office.

There was a conversation at the table at Ridley not too long ago. One student who was from Singapore arguing that you should always obey the government.

And another student, an Australian, who was involved in those sit-ins in members' offices. It was quite an interesting conversation, beautifully conducted.

[ 6 : 41 ] It was very generous in interaction about what's a Christian's responsibility towards government or government policy. If in the ancient world the assumption was that Jews or Christians would find it difficult to honor the emperor because he was pagan, though Peter encourages them to do just that, in the modern world we assume that we will obey the government and we need extra justification if we're going to resist by protesting or by pacifism or something else.

You can see how those two worlds are pretty different from each other. Well, the world we've met these last few weeks, the 16th century world, no less the 16th century world in England, is a kind of turning point between those two world views.

It was assumed in many parts of Reformation England that you should honor the king, but there were a growing number of Christians who believed it might be exactly right to dishonor the king and protest, resist.

the 16th century was the turning point between those ancient and modern views of the relationship between Christians and their government.

So how's it going to work in England with the new ideas coming from Germany and Luther or coming from France and Calvin?

[ 8 : 25 ] How are Protestants in England going to carry out their reforms? What if the king doesn't want to make his kingdom Protestant?

What are you going to do then? What if the queen doesn't want her kingdom to be Protestant? What are you going to do then? Are you going to resist the king or the queen? Or are you going to push against them and claim some kind of right of protest?

Luther's Reformation his small town was so small that Wittenberg could almost fit on this block of land. Geneva wasn't much bigger than that.

But when we get to England we see for one of the first times in these debates how you might make a whole kingdom Protestant.

Not just a small town, not just a small principality, how would you make a whole country change its religion? Now that's a bigger ask, a much more complicated process, right?

[ 9 : 39 ] And in a place like England where kings and queens exercise growing authority, how do you get the king or queen to let you reform the church?

well you know some of the story as well as I do probably from the movies you've watched. The Reformation in England began or at least had its great focus in King Henry VIII wanting an heir to the throne but his wife, Queen Catherine of Aragon had failed to produce a son.

King Henry was a man growing in importance, growing in authority. More importantly he was a man who belonged to the Tudor dynasty.

The Tudors had not long before been victorious in a series of wars called the Wars of the Roses through which England had been greatly shaken and destabilised.

civil war of that sort, especially in the late medieval world is painful, it means crops fail, there's economic destabilisation.

[ 11 : 01 ] King Henry's great desire was not merely for a son, though that was of course the short-term aim. King Henry as a Tudor had the great goal of stabilising England.

England, of which a male heir would provide just the leadership required. If you go into Hampton Court Palace, just west of London, and some of you might well have visited Hampton Court.

Sorry? King Henry VIII, that was his palace, at least later on, he had a number of them, but that was one of them. he renovated it, and he had some tapestries made for the Great Hall.

Now, if you're thinking of King Henry VIII and what you know about him, you could ask the question, what biblical character would he be most likely to include in those tapestries?

movies. The movies present King Henry as particularly lusty or lustful, wanting a male heir, having six wives. So you might think perhaps that on the tapestries he'd have sown Solomon, who had many wives.

[ 12 : 22 ] It wasn't the case. Or you could think, well, perhaps because King Henry saw himself as a warrior and fought France, that he'd have King David. sown into the tapestries.

It wasn't the case. Quite remarkably, I think, the character that all the tapestries in the Great Hall reflect is Abraham.

Because Abraham had the job of starting a new nation. And that's the way Henry sees himself. He's the one who's going to settle England and in his dynasty, the Tudor dynasty, provide for a great and mighty people.

King Henry had been married to Catherine and she herself had previously been married to Henry's brother, older brother, Arthur.

Henry thought he was doing the biblical thing by taking his former brother's wife, or his brother's wife, but when he and Catherine couldn't produce a male heir, something Henry desperately needed for the stability of the land, he started thinking that perhaps he shouldn't have taken his brother's wife, and that God was cursing him.

[ 13 : 50 ] and he found a verse in Leviticus to suggest that his childlessness was God's curse. He wanted a divorce. He wanted a divorce quickly, partly at least because he'd already, we think, fallen in love with someone else at court, Anne Boleyn.

But the Pope wouldn't release Henry from his vows, and this frustrated Henry no end.

The Pope is at that moment being besieged by the Emperor, and the Emperor was related to Queen Catherine of Aragon.

So politically it wasn't the right moment to be asking the Pope, to offer permission for a divorce from the Emperor's niece.

At just that moment when the papacy was refusing to allow permission for Henry to divorce and to remarry, there was a man in Cambridge named Thomas Cranmer, an academic, a lecturer, who suggested that perhaps Henry might turn to the universities of Europe and find there some canon law justification, some legal justification for divorcing Catherine.

[ 15 : 28 ] Henry hadn't thought of this path. Indeed, Henry took up Cranmer's suggestion and asked the universities of France and Italy and so on if they could see any way around it.

Indeed, there were, according to some canon lawyers, some loopholes. That's what you employ lawyers to do, right? To find loopholes. But now, the king had a justification, a legal opinion that would justify his divorce.

he proceeds to divorce her and at the same time to throw off the pope who had been so recalcitrant as the supreme authority of the church in England.

Henry's doing two things at once. He's getting rid of his wife, hoping that his next wife will produce a male heir. And in so doing, he's marginalising the role of the pope in his kingdom, in his empire.

Cranmer, for his efforts, is elevated to a new position. He's no longer an academic at Cambridge. He's now given the position of Archbishop of Canterbury, so the leading churchman in England.

[ 16 : 53 ] And Cranmer, in turn, agrees that now the king should be the ultimate authority of the English church and not the pope.

The legislation that established that was called the act of supremacy, the royal supremacy. At this stage, Henry doesn't agree with Protestants.

In fact, not long before, he'd been awarded a prize by the pope for arguing against Luther's ideas.

Henry was no Protestant. He just believed that the church in England shouldn't be governed by some prince who lived in Italy.

And he actually got quite a bit of support, not because people were necessarily Protestant, but because Englishmen paid taxes to Rome. And now, if Henry were to be the head of the English church, these Christian churches wouldn't have to pay taxes to some foreign leader.

[ 18 : 07 ] And if you get a tax cut, you're pretty happy about it, right? no matter which party gives it to you. Henry was no Protestant, but many supported his policy of making himself the head of the church or the governor of the church.

Henry had appointed Cranmer as Archbishop, but Cranmer was much more committed to Protestant belief than Henry was, which made for a turbulent relationship, right?

Cranmer was wanting to encourage his church, the church in England, to espouse more Protestant views, but he had to tread carefully because the king wasn't always on side, nor were his clergy.

There was a plot to kill Cranmer by his own priests, by his own clergy. These were turbulent times and easily you could lose your life for being on the wrong side of the king.

But Cranmer manages to some degree to both honour the king and to create some measure of reform for the church in England, pushing it away from its Roman Catholic roots towards more Protestant conviction.

[ 19 : 44 ] That was a very skilled man who could do both those things, keep the king happy and disagree with him profoundly. basically, Cranmer believed this.

I'm reading from Proverbs 21 verse 1. In the Lord's hands, the king's heart is a stream of water.

He channels, a stream of water that he channels towards all who please him. In the Lord's hand, the king's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him.

Even the heart of the king belongs to the Lord. Even God can even reach into a king's heart and bring change and change direction.

Cranmer believed that it wasn't any less valid to reform the church through the king's leadership, from the top down.

[ 21 : 06 ] Now, in Germany or in Switzerland, reform had come from the grassroots up. But in England, Scotland to some degree, reform was coming from the top down, from the king's appointments and perhaps with the king's blessing or sometimes not.

God can reform his church any which way he wants to. And he can even do it through kings whose hearts are open to him, but who might sometimes oppose him.

This is a very important lesson, I think, for us and for ministry today. Just because God has reformed his church in one way, in one place, doesn't necessarily mean he has to do the same thing in the same way in another place.

God can reform his church in Melbourne differently from the way he's reformed his church in Sydney. God can reform his church in Australia different from the way God reforms his church in Britain.

God can reform his church in the English speaking world in ways different from the way God might reform his church in the Swahili speaking world. God doesn't have to be locked in to one way of doing things in every place at every time.

[ 22 : 35 ] And though the reform movements in Germany and Switzerland were largely from the ground up, theologians and preachers in local churches, churches, it's okay, isn't it, if God decides in England to use the heart of a king, sometimes on his good days, to use archbishops, to use lecturers in universities, if he wants to reform the church that way.

People say to me often, oh Rhys, how can you be an Anglican minister when the beginnings of the Anglican church was just lusty King Henry, swapping wives, it's a bit of an ignoble foundation for a church, right?

Kings, politics, dirty business, well, it's true, it's sometimes dirty, but that doesn't mean that God can't use the dirt, right?

God can reform the church whichever way he chooses. And it just so happened that at this moment in English history, European history, God used kings and archbishops for great effect.

Well, Henry had, over the page, Henry had reformed the church, at least in as far as he'd said the Pope is no longer the last word.

[ 24 : 06 ] He himself, a layman, king, would be the last word. But that set a whole chain of reaction, a chain of events in action.

Some of it was below the surface, some of it was a bit more obvious, but when Henry died in 1547, his son, actually his son, pardon me, to his third wife, became king of England.

His name was King Edward, Edward VI. Henry had a daughter to Queen Catherine, but no son.

Henry had a daughter to his second wife, Anne Boleyn, but Henry had had a son finally to his third wife, whose name temporarily escapes me.

Jane Seymour, thank you. King Edward VI came to the throne as a youth. He wasn't very old, and he was a sickly young man as well.

[ 25 : 26 ] but under King Edward VI, reform that had kind of percolated below the surface comes out and comes out quickly and dramatically.

And Edward himself had been tutored by Protestant noblemen, so he was very positive about the reform which he as king could introduce.

It was at this moment that Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, writes a prayer book called the Book of Common Prayer, 1549, under Edward, and writes it again, changes it, redrafts it just three years later in 1552.

And these prayer books, these books of common prayer, change the English-speaking church forever.

These books of common prayer were designed to the title Book of Common Prayer, there might be some in your pew somewhere here even, is deliberately titled that because there was just to be one book that the priest and the lay people would both use.

[ 26 : 51 ] It was a common prayer book. It was just one book that was common to everyone. Priests didn't have their own book. People didn't have their own book.

You all have the one book. You're all in this together. You're all equal before the Lord. It was a book of common prayer. And it was a book of common prayer.

It was a book filled with prayers. for the assumption was, in Cramer's mind, if you want to change the country and make it more Protestant, the place to start was by changing the way people pray.

To change the way a person prays is to change the way a person believes. The prayers reflect theology.

And rather than Cramer going on a lecture tour of England, Cramer decided that the way to reform the church was by teaching people to pray differently. It's so far away from our assumptions.

[ 28 : 00 ] It's kind of ridiculous. Imagine you and I say we want to transform the life of Australia. We want to make Australia a more godly place. Okay, we say we default think we elect different politicians or we lobby them or we involve ourselves in media.

We rarely would think okay, we've got to make sure people pray differently. But if you change the way people pray, not to saints, but to the Lord Jesus for example, you're making a big statement about theology.

Well, this prayer book book that Crammer drafted with the help of Nicholas Ridley, the Bishop of London, had a few priorities.

Let me speak, let me talk us through them. One of the most dramatic things, of course, was that this was a church service conducted in English.

English. Now, it had only just become legal to have a Bible in English. For the previous 150 years, it was illegal.

[ 29 : 14 ] It was not permitted in England to own or to create an English Bible. And here's Crammer saying, now let's not just have a Bible in English, let's have the whole church service in English.

And, more than that, let's make sure that the people who are sitting in the rows actually have words in English to say themselves.

Now, this was, I know that some of you here might find some Anglican forms of worship a bit strange or a bit uncomfortable, but in Crammer's day, this was revolutionary for the leader to say, lift up your hearts and for the people to respond by saying, we lift them to the Lord.

You didn't have a place in a church service in the medieval world, right? You just watched. You just watched the priest up the front. Remember, of course, that in the Reformation world, there were no seats in church.

Seats were only invented 100 years ago. So most Christians through history have stood, and you just stood around, perhaps chatted, perhaps had a smoke up the back or something, brought your coffee with you into church, and the priest was up the front doing his thing, and you just stood around, you didn't sit, that's exactly my point, you didn't sit, you stood and just watched.

[ 30 : 42 ] And Crammer's saying, now let's not get the people just to watch, but to say something in their own heart language. church. As I've mentioned, it was one book for both the clergy and the laity, so it was a common book.

Before the Reformation, the priest had his mass book with the words of the mass, and you had your own private devotional book called a primer.

But they were two different books, and that signaled that you belong to different groups in the church. Now there's just to be one book, a book for everyone.

Crammer put together something called the Daily Offices, the morning prayer service, or the evening prayer service. He wanted people to come to church and hear the scriptures read and prayed, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.

He wanted anyone to come to church any day, perhaps twice every day. On the way to the fields in the morning, you could go to your church and say some prayers.

[ 31 : 58 ] On the way home from the fields in the afternoon, you could call in your church and say your prayers. Very importantly, this was Crammer saying, you know how the monks have a number of different services every day in the monastery?

They stop their work and they pray together. Now Crammer is saying, I think you guys are as important as the monks. And you should be able to pray in a morning prayer service or an evening prayer service yourselves.

Why should the monks have all the fun? Crammer? Crammer built his church services with a deliberate theological structure and filled them with Bible, Bible verses, Bible allusions, Bible quotes.

For example, in the services for communion that Crammer wrote, he wanted the communion service to start with the Ten Commandments, the old covenant, and end with the communion service which points to Christ's sacrifice to create the new covenant.

Calvin was, oh Calvin, Crammer, perhaps Calvin as well, Crammer was trying to build the communion service around the story of the Bible, starting with the Old Testament and the Old Covenant, moving through the New Testament and the New Covenant, and along the way stacks of Bible verses to explain the story.

[ 33 : 45 ] Calvin Crammer wanted to teach the doctrine of justification, but cleverly, he didn't just say in the church service, you've got to say the word justification a hundred times, justification, justification, justification.

He wrote prayers that taught justification without using the word. We're not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table, but you alone, Lord, it's your nature always to have mercy.

The word justification is never used there, but the point of the prayer that Anglicans say is to teach the fact that we aren't worthy to take of the Lord's Supper, we're not even worthy to gather up the crumbs under the Lord's table.

We've done nothing for our salvation except received a gift. In the church service, Crammer would begin the communion service with a confession that the people would say together and an absolution, words that reminded you of the gift that God promises.

the reason why Crammer put a confession in a church service was so that you did not go to the priest on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday and privately confess and receive absolution.

[ 35 : 05 ] This is a common confession. He's trying to stop you from going to the priest because coming to church and confessing your sins and hearing these words of assurance is exactly all you need.

Crammer wanted people to believe that the Lord's Supper was neither a sacrifice, you weren't recreating the death of Jesus as some might have understood the mass to do and Crammer was also saying that the Lord's Supper is not merely being reminded of what Jesus did on the cross.

it's neither sacrifice nor memorial. Crammer is wanting to teach that when you take the bread and the wine, God is preaching the gospel to you by name.

As you take the bread and the wine, God is actively at that moment encouraging you in the faith. But it's only when you've taken the bread and the wine by faith that God encourages you.

Crammer is saying over there are the Roman Catholics who believed in the sacrifice of the mass. Crammer is saying that's not us. Over there were some more Baptist, Anabaptist or Swinglian believers who believed that the bread and the wine was like a piece of string around your finger just to remind you that Christ had died.

[ 36 : 39 ] Crammer is saying that's not what we're about. Crammer argued that the bread and the wine are a communion. You're actually meeting the Lord. At that moment as you take bread and wine God is actively ministering to your heart.

And the words that Crammer wrote in this book were and are still in use today. His ability as a wordsmith to write beautiful, poetic, elevated, memorable language is extraordinary.

We are gathered here today. Now you all know what I'm about to say next, right? You know what kind of a church service it is that begins, we are gathered here today. For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, who wrote that?

Well, Crammer wrote it. And even if you're an Anglican, those are words that you'll still use in a Baptist church service, in a Church of Christ church service, in a Presbyterian church service.

Crammer's ability as a wordsmith is quite extraordinary. His words are with us today. This was permitted under King Edward, King Edward VI.

[ 38 : 04 ] Crammer was trying to reform the Church of England from the top down by producing a book, a book of prayers that would change the way people expressed their trust in God.

It was national reform through liturgical renewal. Now, I'm actually a big fan of the prayer book, I'll put it out there.

I don't think we should be slaves to it, but I think if we want to reteach our land great biblical Protestant truth, a great way to do it is by teaching people to pray in a Protestant way.

Unfortunately though, King Edward only reigned for six years. He reigned from 1547 to 1553. He was a sickly young man and he died leaving England's leadership to Queen Mary, his half sister.

Queen Mary was the daughter of Henry to his first wife, Catherine of Arrigan. She was a Spanish princess, Roman Catholic princess.

[ 39 : 32 ] So perhaps not surprisingly, the daughter of Henry and Catherine was herself a committed Roman Catholic.



Besides, Henry had junked his first wife, Catherine, so their daughter, Mary, is likely to want to get some kind of revenge. Or if revenge is too strong a word, at least to turn back the clock and reassert what she believed was the rightness of Roman Catholic worship.

Well, Cranmer has now served under King Henry, who wasn't particularly Protestant, and he served under King Edward, who was very Protestant, and now he's beginning to serve under Queen Mary, who wasn't Protestant at all.

Making matters worse, before Mary came to the throne, Cranmer had supported the desire of Lady Jane Grey to take the throne, and don't ask me how she was related to them, she was a second cousin, three times removed via Spain and France or something, I don't know.

She had a right to the throne, and Cranmer supported her pretension, but she reigned only a few days, and was deposed, and Mary takes the throne.

[ 41 : 04 ] This was not going to sit well, with Mary, that her Archbishop, Cranmer, had at first not supported her accession to the throne.

Well, Queen Mary tried to turn back the clock. She tried to revive a kind of church service that was more Roman Catholic, though the question is how much the people in the pew by this stage had themselves become Protestants.

That's a debate that historians argue about still. Was she really turning back the clock and just changing the prayer book, and people in church going, oh my goodness, that's fantastic, we hated that Protestant stuff.

We've only had it for three years and it never really took. Or were people in the pew very committed to the Protestant stuff? It's hard to work out.

What it did mean is that the leaders of the church under Mary, who themselves might have been appointed under Edward, her predecessor, resisted Mary's attempts and often for their efforts were burned, were executed, giving Queen Mary, Mary Tudor, the nickname Bloody Queen Mary, because under her rule, some hundreds and hundreds of Christians were burned.

[ 42 : 38 ] Henry had also dissolved, this was 30 years earlier, 20 years earlier at least, Henry had dissolved the monasteries, he'd sold off the land the monasteries owned, and now Mary's trying to get it back and give it back to the church.

But once you've sold something, it's very hard to unsell it and to take the money from the nobles who bought the land and pass it back to the monks or the monasteries.

So Mary is getting into a lot of political, legal hot water as well as finding resistance amongst the leaders of the church.

Under Mary's rule, some famous bishops are tried and executed. Classically, Bishop Ridley and Bishop Latimer were killed in Oxford in 1555.

1555. And when they burned, Cranmer was under house arrest and he was being worked on to change his mind, to recant, to reject his Protestant beliefs.

[ 43 : 55 ] In fact, when Ridley and Latimer were burned, Cranmer was paraded out and was standing on the roof of a nearby building watching down and seeing his two friend bishops being burned as a way of softening him, weakening him, adding psychological pressure.

And indeed, in the end, sad as it might sound, Cranmer turned away from his Protestant convictions. He has been subjected to psychological, moral, emotional pressure and he ends up saying, I was wrong.

I shouldn't have maintained or defended Protestant convictions. However, on his way to being burned, sorry, he renounced his Protestant convictions and then Queen Mary said, oh, well, it doesn't really matter, we're going to burn you anyway.

We just think that now you're an embarrassment to the rain. He recanted his recantation. He changed his mind, whether it was on the way to the pyre, the fire, we're not quite sure, but certainly he was allowed to get up and preach a sermon on his way to his execution spot and he started preaching a Protestant sermon.

How long before that he'd recanted his recantation, it's for historians to work out. He was preaching a sermon, I've got a quote there for you.

[ 45 : 48 ] As he preached, he said this line, as for the Pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy and as Antichrist with all his false doctrine.

At that point, they shut him down and led him away from the pulpit. You can quite understand that he's deliberately being inflammatory. Of course, in the 16th century, it was very unusual to describe any human being as the Antichrist, but now not only to describe a human being as the Antichrist, but to describe the Pope, the leader of the Church, as the Antichrist, of course, was a bridge too far.

Cramer is killed in 1556, February 1556, for his Protestant convictions.

That's safe to say. And it's at this point that my questions about Cramer become really difficult to resolve.

Is he a hero or not? Should you imitate Cramer or not? He weakened and gave up at least temporarily his Protestant convictions under great pressure, but he took them up again and preached his final sermon in a way that was clearly of Protestant persuasion.

[ 47 : 27 ] People ask the question, was Cramer principled or pragmatic? Was he a man who had great deep convictions or was he a man who just blew where the wind took him?

some days more Protestant, some days less Protestant. Well, in the end, I take the line that he was a man of deep Protestant convictions, though at the end through pressure, he weakened.

And at that point, I'm reminded of the example of the Apostle Peter. Peter. Remember the story? I'll read some verses from Mark's Gospel. In Mark 14, he began when questioned to call down curses, he swore to them, I don't know this man whom you're talking about, Peter said.

Immediately, the cock crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken to him, before the rooster crows twice, you'll disown me three times.

So Peter broke down and wept. Peter, the great apostle, whose writings are included in the New Testament, who himself, the Roman Church argued, was their first pope, himself, had had a weak moment.

[ 49 : 12 ] But that doesn't mean that just because you've got a weak moment, that you shouldn't listen to someone, right? In fact, if you turn over a page to Mark 16, Jesus, having been risen from the dead, says, Jesus, the spirit dressed in white robe standing on the right side, says, don't be alarmed, you're looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified, he has risen, he is not here, see the place where they laid him, but go, tell his disciples and Peter, he's going ahead of you into Galilee, there you'll see him, just as he told you.

Jesus, on being raised from the dead, names Peter as someone he wants to meet in Galilee. The very Peter who just a chapter earlier had denied the Lord Christ, is here being welcomed back to meet the Lord Christ, this forgiven sinner.

Well, debates, no doubt, will forever be asked, was Cranmer principled or just pragmatic? Either way, I like him because he reflects in my mind the kind of ministry of the apostle Peter though he denied the Lord Christ, nonetheless was welcomed, forgiven, home, and becomes a leader for the church.

Now, the detail in the English Reformation, kings, queens, kids, is complicated but I wonder if you've seen through the details and have any kind of questions that you might want to ask.

Was the head of the church actually married or did she actually do that out? Yes, so the question for the recording is did Mary still maintain the title head of the church?

[ 51 : 26 ] Mary was nervous about the title head of the church because in her mind that belonged to the pope. It's not easy to turn back the clock. She began to do it. She at least wanted to describe herself as the governor of the church and not the head of the church for she believed that in the end it was only the Lord Jesus who was the head of the church not even the pope.

So Mary was in a quite difficult position and she was trying to roll back the reform though Mary ruled only six years and she died feigning childbirth.

She thought she was pregnant and giving birth. She actually had a massive tumour that she was trying to deliver. So she also lasts on the throne very long when Queen Elizabeth takes the throne and Elizabeth is very clear that she should use the word governor and not head.

And to this day Queen Elizabeth in England is not the head of the Anglican church she's the governor of the Anglican church. Though in Australia the king or the queen has no authority in the Anglican church whatsoever.

So the question is how should we respond or relate to Roman Catholics today?

[ 52 : 54 ] The Roman Catholic church has changed amazingly since the 16th century. So recently the Roman church has accepted some of Luther's teachings and if you went into some Catholic churches you might hear a sermon that's not unlike a sermon in a Protestant church depending on the day you're there.

That is the Roman church is actually a very different kind of church from what it was 400 years ago. So I've served for a number of years on the Anglican Roman Catholic dialogue in Australia where six Anglicans and six Roman Catholics would meet in the room a couple of times a year and discuss kind of doctrine particular issues.

And for many in the room the Roman Catholics were my soulmates to tell you the truth. I had more in common with them than some of the Anglicans that were in the room. They were godly, they were committed to the scriptures and we have big disagreements but they named the name of Christ and I wanted to honour the way they saw themselves as Christians and then make that my default.

And if at a later time I decided that I didn't think they were then that would be a subsequent decision I'd have to make. But if I meet someone who names the name of Christ my default is to believe that they're Christians though they could be very seriously wrong in their doctrine.

All of us have some wrong beliefs and that doesn't disqualify us from being a Christian. Now I would want to argue with those Roman Catholics in that group on matters of doctrine and we did argue quite, not heatedly, because they're actually quite decent debates, but persistently over years the same kind of issues came up, came up.

[ 54 : 52 ] So I'm not giving theological ground, but I do want to say that I can imagine that there are Roman Catholics who are Christians, yes.

Yeah. There are some who are not and there are some in their leadership who are not, but I could say the same of the Anglican Church or the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church, depending on which country I'm in. Yeah.

I was very interested in what you said about the book of common prayer. Yes, I see.

Well, it's true, isn't it, that there are some people who don't feel that God's going to hear their prayers and they turn to people who they think have been authorized as prayers, whether it might be a minister or someone who's a senior lay person in the church.

And I don't, I think we should all be teaching and expecting that people can know their own relationship, their own status, their own assurance before the Lord.

[ 55 : 52 ] But sometimes for people, they never seem to get that confidence. Perhaps just one or two questions before we conclude. Sister? Do I have a question?

Because I don't ask this to you. Yes, yes, yes. In that way? Yes. Well, it's your call in the end, isn't it? You don't have to see Thomas Cranmer as a hero of the faith.

in the end, he thought his job was to honour the king. And if the king said, I've found a legal loophole and I think I can justify my divorce, you do it, my servant, archbishop, then he, Cranmer, was of the mind he had to obey his king and do it.

So he would have said he was just obeying 1 Peter 2 and honouring his king. Of course, Man for All Seasons, that play, I read it at school as well, and Thomas More is a Roman Catholic and he opposes the way that Henry's taking the kingdom and he's trying to hold it back in its more traditional Catholic allegiance to the Pope.

But he was a man of great principle, even though I disagree with him theologically. Cranmer I'd agree with theologically, though I see the point that there might be some kind of moral flabbiness as well.

[ 57 : 15 ] I get the last question, brother. Yeah. So what do you see as the decision for social rules on how the church is operating? Well, you explained to me how you would apply 1 Peter 2, where it says, honour the king, honour the emperor, and the assumption in 1 Peter is that that emperor is someone who opposes the church, who might well be persecuting the church.

So Peter still thinks that the common good requires us to obey. Though you might argue that Peter is providing not advice for every moment in history, but it's providing advice for a particular moment, and we've got to be careful how we do the application.

But the New Testament is pretty clear that you submit even to governments that aren't always good. The question becomes, when do you not resist?

When do you not submit? When do you resist? That's, of course, another longer question, and I think we'll leave it at that. Good. Just thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.