

**Introduction:**

Welcome to the Living By of Faith podcast. My name is Josh DeGroot, and this is episode number two. Thanks for checking this out. This is a podcast where we look at current news and events, theology, practical issues, and a little bit of history from the perspective of the life of faith in Christ - I hope you find it helpful, informative, and encouraging. Let's get started.

**Current news and events**

Well, once again coronavirus is dominating the news.

And one of the interesting discussions over the past few weeks has to do with essential versus non essential businesses. Just what is a non essential business? Well, maybe we should turn it around and ask, "What is an essential business?" Most would agree that food is essential for us to continue living and so grocery stores are essential and should therefore stay open. Furthermore, some require ongoing medical care and/or medication and so healthcare operations are deemed essential. The Department of Homeland Security has put out a list of operations considered essential which included such things as garbage collection, post office and shipping businesses, gas stations and repair shops, banks, daycare centers, among other things.

But the whole idea of essential versus non essential businesses begs a huge question. Essential to whom? There are millions of people out of work right now who feel their jobs were essential - at least to them and their families. The small business owner who runs a family barber shop which is now closed believes his business is essential - essential to provide for his employees and family.

This is why it is so important that as Christians we understand that it is not a matter of caring about lives OR the economy. Of course we should be concerned about the lives of those who contract COVID-19. But to care about the economy is also to care about lives. It is no surprise that someone's job has often been described as their "livelihood". It is called livelihood, because it is the means by which one is able to secure the things necessary for life, for living. And so one's livelihood is essential in order to obtain the things needed to live. So the laws or guidelines being imposed nationally and even more at a state and local level affect real lives in many ways and at many levels.

Those governing as authorities should be in our constant prayer, that they would govern wisely, with humility and in the fear of the Lord, on both fronts. On the one hand working to prevent people - especially those most vulnerable - from contracting this coronavirus, while also seeking to prevent the economy from suffering irreparable damage which, remember, damages real people, sometimes in irreparable ways.

And for Christians, as we seek to live faithfully in this present moment, we must remember that our allegiance is first and foremost to the Lord Jesus Christ. The most fundamental and ancient Christian confession comes from Romans 10:9, "Jesus is Lord". We live under the law of Christ, which is the law of love. And therefore, we should love all of our neighbors. Those who would suffer real harm from the coronavirus and those who are suffering real harm from the loss of livelihood. Not either/or, both.

## **Catechesis section**

The next section is what I call the catechesis section. Now, I won't explain this every week, but since this podcast is new and some may not be familiar with what catechesis is, I want to explain again this time and probably for the next couple weeks. For centuries Christians gave themselves to the practice of learning the doctrines of the Christian faith by way of a catechism. Catechesis simply means to teach orally or instruct by word of mouth. This practice would benefit us much in our day. A day in which confusion about truth and when, even in the church, ignorance about the Christian faith, flourish. It would help to fill our minds and hearts with clear truth about God and godliness, about gospel truth and faithful living.

So I would like to make my way through a modern catechism called New City Catechism. It takes from a number of ancient ones and puts them in modern vernacular in the form of 52 questions and answers with scripture - so one for each week. You can buy the book online (\$7.50) or you can download the app on your phone for free. And I should note that if you download the app, there are shorter answers for younger kids.

### **Question 2: What is God?**

**Answer:** God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will.

There is no greater thing to think about or talk about than God. There can be no higher subject we could occupy our minds with. In the garden, Adam and Eve fell for the temptation that if they ate the fruit of the tree, they could be like God. The essence of humility is to recognize that God is God and I am not.

God is not just a little above us. Not even a lot above us. He is in a category all by himself. There is none like him. The answer we read says he is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable. Amazingly all that God is, he always has been and always will be. He is never growing, learning, or becoming. He simply is. And we see that he is perfect in power, goodness, glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. He always has been and always will be.

In a world that is constantly changing, where truth is malleable, where justice is subjective, and increasingly evil is called good, we need to know our God who defines all of these things and does not change. And we need to trust that he is governing all things for his glory and the good of his people.

**Psalms 86:8-10, 15** - <sup>8</sup> There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. <sup>9</sup> All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. <sup>10</sup> For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. <sup>15</sup> But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Who is like our God? There is no one. He is unmatched in his majesty, power, and glory as well as in his patience, love, and faithfulness.

### **Christian History Section**

In our history section, I want to tell you about a young man who died 117 years ago today, on April 9, 1913. Part of our heritage as Christians is the long line of faithful believers who have gone before us. At RLC we are currently making our way through the book of Hebrews and are now in chapter 11, which is famously known as the “faith chapter” or the “honor roll of the faithful” as it recounts for us men and women who had faith in God which led them to live lives of dedication and sacrifice, looking to future reward. So this story is about another among the “great cloud of witnesses” surrounding us.

His name - William Borden. I hope you remember this name. William Borden grew up in a wealthy Chicago family. He was unusually inclined as a young boy to spiritual things. Broden was converted at the age of 7 under the preaching ministry of RA Torey at Moody Memorial Church, but it was a trip around the world following his high school graduation that set him on a course that would marked him with a passion for world missions. During this trip, Borden saw the deep spiritual need of many of the peoples he was exposed to, and especially longed to bring the gospel to China. After going to Yale and later Princeton Seminary, Borden joined the China Inland Mission and set sail for Cairo Egypt to learn Arabic before going to China.

While in Egypt, William threw himself into his studies as well as ministry opportunities and was quickly beloved by many. But unfortunately, not long after he arrived in Cairo, William contracted cerebral meningitis and died on April 9, 1913. Borden never made it to China. His fortune of almost one million dollars was left to domestic and foreign missions agencies.

After his death some of William’s friends found a piece of paper under his pillow with the words “No Reserve! No Retreat! No Regrets” written on it. The short, remarkable life of William Borden is an example of complete dedication and sacrifice out of love for the Lord Jesus. Borden lived out the words Paul spoke in Acts 20:24: “But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord J esus Christ..“

Only the good news of Jesus Christ can deeply change a heart like this. Only the gospel can produce this kind of loving dedication to Christ. And Borden’s dedication spoke powerfully to other and still speaks even after he is dead. On his tombstone are written the epitaph: “Apart from faith in Christ, there is no explanation for such a life.”

When you are dead and gone, what do you want to be remembered for? What do you want to be remembered for? What would you want your epitaph to read? Let the story of William Borden fuel you to that end, and ask the Lord to make it a reality.

Thanks again for listening to the living by faith podcast. If you found it helpful, please like and share. Until next time, “may the grace of the Lord J esus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the S pirit be with you all.”