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MISTRAL MYERS: Hi there. You're listening to the "Talks at Google" podcast, where great minds meet. I'm Mistral, bringing you this week's episode. "Talks at Google" brings the world's most influential thinkers, creators, makers, and doers all to one place. Every episode of this podcast is taken from a video that can be seen at [Youtube.com/TalksAtGoogle](https://www.youtube.com/TalksAtGoogle). Bishop Barron is the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries and Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and is a #1 Amazon best-selling author with numerous books, essays, and articles on theology and the spiritual life in addition to his regular YouTube videos, which you can find at [Youtube.com/WordOnFireVideo](https://www.youtube.com/WordOnFireVideo). He discusses how our minds relentlessly seek and how religion, at its best, never shuts down the mind but opens it up.

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And now, here's Bishop Robert Barron, "Religion and the opening up of the mind."

ROBERT BARRON: Thank you guys very much. Thanks. Well, thank you very much. Thanks for that nice introduction, and it really is a delight to be here at-- I mean, you all know this--one of the most significant cultural centers really in the world. I've been very warmly received, so thanks for the invitation and thanks for the great hospitality. I wanna talk about religion and the opening up of the mind. Because very often religion sort of gets a bad rap. It's superstitious. It's subrational. It's opposed to the mind. I'm gonna argue au contraire-- just the contrary--that religion, authentically construed, is meant to open up the mind and the will.

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Okay? That's my goal today. You know, a term that now is common parlance but didn't exist when I was a young man is search engine. And here we are at the headquarters of the most popular and powerful search engine on the planet. At our fingertips now, quite literally, is almost all the knowledge, all the wisdom, information that the human race has accumulated. And we can just press a button and up it comes. Just recently I was with a older friend of mine, and he was-- mentioned the 1937 World Series. And he was convinced that game three ended with a certain score but wasn't sure what it was. And I said, "Well, let's check Mr. Google." So of course we did and up came the information about game three of the 1937 World Series. Not that long ago I was with someone else and we were wondering about a passage in the "Divine Comedy" of Dante, and, of course, we were able to find it very quickly. Here's one. Now, there's maybe a few in the room old enough to remember the show "F Troop." Remember that? From the '60s? I see that I got a few of you.

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I was with some friends from my, you know, era, and we were arguing about the characters on "F Troop." And I said, "Well, let's ask Mr. Google." So up came the characters on "F Troop." So, you know that. And we have, really, at this extraordinary civilizational moment, the capacity to access the wisdom of the race. Now, see, search engine. Search engine triggers for me an awful lot of resonances with religion. Now how come? The mind, by an inner instinct, is restless, even relentlessly so, right? The mind searches for truth. And it finds it. It finds a particular truth like the ones I just mentioned. But does the mind ever rest at that point? No, no, no. The minute we find some truth, usually 12 more questions emerge. Think of the way we all surf the web, right? We go looking for something, but it leads us somewhere else then somewhere else, somewhere else again, and then we find all this so fascinating, we forget what we were originally looking for.

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The mind is restless, even relentlessly so. It never rests. Or if it does, it's the way a climber might rest on the side of a mountain just to catch his breath before heading back up, right? It searches. It

searches. The more it knows, the more it wants to know. My great intellectual hero is St. Thomas Aquinas, and he spoke in the 13th century of the intellectus agens. That's his Latin. And usually it's transliterated into English as the agent intellect, which sounds rather, you know, cold. You see agens, in Latin, is a participle--doing, making, moving. Intellectus agens is the restless searching mind. Now, where's it going, the intellectus agens? What's it looking for? Here I love the one-liner from the great Jesuit philosopher Bernard Lonergan.

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Lonergan says it's very simple. The mind wants to know everything about everything. Now, Google, this should be familiar to you, right? But that's the natural dynamism of the mind. Not to know just this particular truth or that. Not just the conglomeration of all particular truths. The mind wants to know everything about everything. It wants not just particular truths. It wants the truth itself. It wants the source of reality itself. That's how hungry the mind is. Another Lonergan line is there's an emptiness like the emptiness of a box. It's kind of a dumb emptiness just waiting to be filled. But there's also the emptiness of the stomach. It's empty, but it knows what it wants, right? The mind is empty at the beginning of life but not like a box, more like a stomach. Intellectus agens. Searching. Searching until it comes to its fulfillment only in knowing everything about everything.

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The very source of reality. Okay? True of the mind, equally true of the will. The second great dynamic of the human spirit, the will. Now, the will seeks not the true, but the good. So right now, everyone in this room, we're all seeking the good in some way. So I'm seeking the good of speaking to you. You're seeking--I hope you find it--some good in my talk. You know, we talk about final causality. Aristotle made that distinction, right, between efficient causality. It's like a pushing cause. Think of all the physical sciences--the modern sciences are based upon efficient causality. Where do things come from? What brings them into being? But final causality, Aristotle thought, was more important. That's the pulling cause, right. What attracts or lures things? Now, that's a talk for another day.

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We could debate final causality in nature, but I think no one would disagree that final causality obtains in our world that we human beings are drawn by the good. It lures our wills. Okay. But remember the intellectus agens. The restless, seeking, never satisfied mind. Same is true of the will. Notice how any act of the will can be analyzed in a kind of Russian doll manner. Do you know what I mean? The one doll inside the other. That every particular act of the will, if we think about it, is situated in a broader and wider act of the will, which in turn is in a broader and wider-- broader and wider, et cetera. And what am I talking about? Think about getting out of bed in the morning, right. So, as an act of the will-- unless you fell out of bed-- but if you get out of bed the normal way, it's an act of the will. You're seeking a good--to start your day.

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But see, that good nests in a higher good. Why do you get out of bed? Well, I wanna get to work. Okay. Why do you wanna get to work? Well, I need to make money. Well, why do you need to make money? Well, I wanna support myself and my family. Why do you wanna support yourself and your family? Well, supporting my family leads to their flourishing. Well, why do you want that? Because my family flourishing makes me happy, and I wanna be happy all the time and in an unconditioned way. Just as the mind won't rest until it knows everything about everything, so the will doesn't rest until it finds an unconditioned happiness. Now, I mean, analyze any act of the will that way. I sent my car to the mechanic. Well, how come? So the car will run better. Well, why do you want that? So I can get to work, and now do that analysis.

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Or so I can get to my friends more easily. Well, why do you want that? Well, being with my friend is a great good that makes me happy, and I wanna be happy all the time and in an unconditioned way. I go to a basketball game. This is kind of easier to analyze. Well, why do you want that? Well, 'cause basketball is interesting and beautiful and contemplating it makes me happy and I wanna be happy all the time and in an unconditioned way. You see, the will, if we analyze it sufficiently, is conditioned by a desire for beatitudo. I'm using this Latin term on purpose because it was Thomas Aquinas' term. Happiness. Beatus means happy in Latin. Beatitudo is the happiness I'm talking about, which is not the happiness that comes from a particular act of the will like, "Hey, I went to, you know, Bishop Barron's talk. Yeah, it was okay. I liked it. You know, it made me happy in a very limited way." Okay. I'll be happy if that's true.

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But then, see, analyze any act, including this one, and you'll eventually get to the desire at the ground of the will for beatitudo. Unconditioned happiness. Now, here's an interesting thing, everybody. Prior to modernity, prior to the rise of the sciences, the principal question that preoccupied the minds of the best and brightest people in the West was the nature of beatitudo. See, what is it? So we all want it. And that's true, by the way, of the religious believer, of the agnostic, the atheist-- everybody wants beatitudo. It's the first mover of the will. So what is it? And can I submit to you, there is no question more importance than that. And see, one of the tragedies, I think, of our time is so often we bracket that question 'cause we're so preoccupied with the achievements of our sciences-- and God bless them. I'm all in favor of them.

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Don't get me wrong. But we tend to bracket the question that, prior to modernity, the best and brightest people thought was the most important. What is this beatitudo that all of us, at least implicitly, are seeking? Okay? And I wanna give you a little bit now of Thomas Aquinas' analysis of this. You could find it, by the way, in the very beginning of the second part of his great "Summa Theologiae," his summary of theology. You know what's interesting? Many years ago, there was a prominent Catholic cardinal who had a little quip that he often used. He said, "Good morality is like good art; it begins with a drawing of a line." Now, it's a clever line, but I think, actually, it's wrong. Because that's not the way Aquinas starts. The drawing of a line, like a law. I'm in favor of it. Don't get me wrong. We have to get to drawing-- some drawing of lines. But Aquinas begins not with the law. That happens in question 90. Nine-zero.

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Question one. Question one. And here he's just like all his premodern colleagues. Question one-- what is beatitudo? What is the happiness that is luring our wills? Okay? So he does a kind of process of elimination. He looks at four classical candidates. What great people had said and thought about the nature of beatitudo. So first he says some people claim that wealth is beatitudo. To be rich, sufficiently. To be sufficiently wealthy. That's the beatitudo that finally I am seeking. Now, is that a legitimate position? Well, in a way. I mean, I get it. Lots of very smart people have said that. And, may I submit, in our culture especially, you can find an awful lot of people that I think hold to that.

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If I just have enough, you know, money in the bank, I have a big enough house, nice enough cars, I have a commodious life, I'll be happy. And that's, in fact, what I'm always implicitly desiring in all my acts of the will. True? Aquinas says no. Wealth is good, but it can't be the unconditioned good. How come? Well, he says, look, what does wealth mean? He says wealth in the natural sense means-- and let me give us a quote here that makes it sound kind of contemporary. He says, "Wealth serves as a remedy for our natural wants such as food, drink, clothing, cars, dwellings, and such like." That's from the 13th century but it sounds like today, doesn't it? What does wealth get me? It's a remedy for natural wants.

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So these natural wants like I'm hungry, I'm thirsty, I'm uncomfortable, and so wealth gives me food, drink, clothing cars, dwellings and such like. Goods? Yeah. But it can't be the ultimate good. Why? Why? 'Cause Thomas says those things are the condition for the possibility of much higher goods. And think about it for second. Once you've discovered--you've found enough food and drink, you've got a shelter, you're living in a sort of comfortable, commodious way, then you can aspire to philosophy and science and friendship and conversation. These higher goods. Wealth is a proximate good. It can't be, therefore, the ultimate good. So that can't be beatitudo, what we're all implicitly seeking. Okay? Others have said beatitudo-- happiness--consists in honors. Now, think about it for a second.

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How many societies, both East and West, around the world, trans-historically, how many societies are predicated upon honor and shame? Right? That the worst thing you can experience is to be shamed, and therefore, concomitantly, the best thing is to be honored. And I know lots of people whose lives are pretty much centered around the quest for honor. To be thought highly of. To be given titles and prerogatives, right? To be held up. Okay. Is honor, though, beatitudo? And Aquinas says no. It can't be. Why? 'Cause honor, he says, is like a flag that we put on something good, noble, and virtuous. And so you notice someone who's got great ability or they're leading a virtuous life, and you want to put a flag on that to say, "Hey, everybody. Look at that. That's worth emulating. That's honor."

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So think of titles and positions and prerogatives and so on. Signs of respect. They are flags of virtue or nobility. Therefore, they're derivative. They're secondary. What matters much more than honor are the things that are being honored, namely your virtue, nobility, and so on. Therefore, honor, good thing, sure. But it can't be beatitudo. It can't be the happiness that, deep down, we're all seeking. Okay. But here's another--another indication that honor can't be the ultimate good. Notice, Aquinas says, who in your society is being honored the most. Are they the very best people? The question answers itself, doesn't it? Age to age. Think of the people who get the most attention, the most adulation. Are they in fact the best? Again, it answers itself. Others have said, you know what beatitudo is?

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It's power. Power. And again, this has a lot of weight across the ages. Lots of impressive, important people have argued for this, and, deep down, there are a lot of people, age after age, who do indeed seek power as their ultimate good. You know, go back to the Tolkien movies and the great Tolkien novels. What's the ring but a ring of power, right? What are they seeking? What's everybody drawn to? Talk about final causality, right? The minute the ring gets near anybody--well, it's the ring of power. It is indeed something that we all seek. I think in our culture, too, I would correlate power and freedom very strongly, you know. For Americans or many Westerners, what's the supreme value but freedom? See, what's freedom but power? Right? Don't tread on me. Don't get in my way.

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Let me do what I wanna do. Go where I wanna go. Accomplish what I wanna accomplish. And isn't it true that we hate it when people take away our freedom? I do. I hate it, whether that's in a physical sense or psychological sense or spiritual sense. And so, okay, power does seem to be something very alluring. Notice, too, please--so keep Tolkien in mind--but also keep in mind in the Gospels, the great stories of the temptation of Jesus. What's the highest temptation? The third temptation? The devil takes him to a high place and shows him what? All the kingdoms of the world in one glance, and all these I will give you if you but bow down and worship me. It's temptation to

power, isn't it? So it is alluring, but is it beatitudo? Aquinas says no. It can't be. Why? Very simple reason. Power, he says, is a source of activity that allows us to attain an end, but beatitudo is an end.

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Do you see what he means? Whatever this beatitudo is, it's something that I'm going for-- that I want. It's a good that's out there. Power is terrific as a means of attaining ends. Right? You give me the power to do this, the power to do that, the power to attain, but power in itself is not what you want. It's the good that power gives you access to, right? Therefore, power can't in itself be beatitudo. Okay? So it's not wealth, not honor, not power. Here's the fourth great candidate. And I think everybody, from a spiritual standpoint, it's a really helpful analysis because all of us, we're all sinners in this room, I trust. We're all beguiled by these things in some way. We all tend to mistake these for beatitudo. So the fourth one, Thomas says, is pleasure. Now, this is a very old philosophical position.

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It's called hedonism. And don't make fun of hedonism as just like, you know, eat, drink, and be merry. Hedonism is a very noble classical position that says what we all seek, deep down, is pleasure. Now, it could be pleasure in food and drink and so on, but also pleasure in the arts, pleasure in sports, pleasure in knowledge, et cetera. So it can be a more refined form of hedonism, but the pleasure, it seems, is this ultimate good. It seems to be beatitudo. Yeah, it might seem that way, says Aquinas, but it can't be. How come? Because pleasure, he says, is a side effect of something much more fundamental. So when I achieve some physical well-being, I experience pleasure as a happy side effect, but it's the health of the body that's really substantive. Or when I make some great spiritual, intellectual, cultural attainment, I might feel a rush of pleasure accompanying that, but the pleasure is just derivative, isn't it, from the substantive accomplishment?

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So pleasure can't be it. Okay. So where are we now? We all want beatitudo. Everyone in this room. Again, this is religious, nonreligious, believer, atheists--everybody wants beatitudo. Otherwise, you would not get out of bed in the morning. So what is it? What is it? Well, it's not wealth. It's not power. It's not pleasure. It's not honor. Thomas says the desire for happiness, for beatitudo, is an infinite desire. Remember I said we wanna be happy all the time and in an unconditioned way, don't we? I don't wanna settle for some proximate good, some limited, mitigated good. I want goodness itself. And therefore, he concludes, beatitudo cannot be any good in this world of wealth, pleasure, power, honor, or anything else.

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None of that can satisfy this longing of the soul and of the heart--this questing, this searching for beatitudo. It is only in God. Listen to his quote. "Hence, it's evident that nothing can lull a person's will save the universal good, and this is to be found not in any creature but in God alone." Now, can I submit to you, everybody, this is the moral wisdom of the great biblical tradition, and the roots of this go way back into the Scriptures themselves, but this is the way Aquinas analyzes it philosophically. What we want cannot be met by anything in this world. Just as what the mind wants, see, does not correspond to any particular bit of knowledge within the world.

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The mind wants to know unconditioned truth. The will wants the unconditioned good. That hunger is at the source of religion it seems to me. That opening up of the questing-minded heart is what it's all about. Okay? Now, can I turn from that little philosophical analysis to the Bible, and I wanna share with you a story that I've always loved, and I think it speaks precisely to this point. It's a story from the first book of Kings in the Old Testament. It's a story dealing with Elijah and the priests of

Baal. Now, as I tell the story, you might remember it. During this period, Israel had gone over to false worship. So King Ahab--remember, so Melville calls his captain Ahab. And poor Captain Ahab because we hear in the Bible that Ahab is worse than all the kings of Israel combined.

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And knowing the rogues' gallery of the kings of Israel, that's saying a mouthful, right? So, Ahab is a really bad guy. More to it, his wife, Jezebel, has now drawn him into the worship of false Gods. So Elijah the prophet rises up. We know nothing about him except he's from the little town of Tishbe. Now, talk to specialists historians of the ancient world--they don't know where Tishbe was. So we know nothing about Elijah. He suddenly appears on the scene, and he challenges Ahab. He says you know the drought we're having here in this country? It's because of the false worship. Very interesting thing, now, in the Bible. Never read the punishments of God as somehow, like, arbitrary. God's just having a bad day, and so he's imposing this arbitrary--no, no. It's spiritual physics. The garden. Go back to the beginning. What's the garden symbolic of but flourishing. The flourishing that God wants for his people.

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Adam and Eve expelled from the garden not capriciously, arbitrarily, but as spiritual physics. When we fall away from God, we tend to fall into lifelessness. That's the point. And so the drought, now, that Elijah points out, is a function of false worship. And let me just--I'm gonna draw on that for a second. Keep Aquinas in mind and beatitudo and the seeking of the good, right. And keep in mind those substitutes for beatitudo. Wealth, pleasure, honor, power. At the very beginning of the book of Genesis, we hear about God making the heavens and the earth, right? And everything is coming forth in this orderly manner. Mind you, please, not science, high poetry this is, right? So as things come forth in this orderly way--you know, let there be light and there was light. Let the earth come forth. It came forth. Let the earth, you know, teem with animals and so on and so forth. Stars and the planets all come forth in this orderly procession from God.

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Two basic moves are being made here symbolically. First of all, the author is dethroning all these false claimants to divinity. Think for a second of the planets and the moon and the stars, mountains, animals, the river, et cetera. What do they all have in common? They were all, at one point or another, worshiped in the ancient world. These are all Gods worthy of worship. The author of Genesis is saying No. No. No. No. No. These are all creatures of God, not God. Don't worship them. Are they good? Yes. And their conglomeration, indeed, is very good, but they're not God. Don't worship them. Now, here's the second point he's making--and here the Catholics will understand what I'm talking about--as these things come forth in an orderly manner, one after the other, in a stately procession, what does that remind you of?

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It should remind you a bit of the mass and of the way the ministers of the mass process in. And the mass, of course, its roots go way back into the Jewish Temple rituals and so on, right? There's the idea. Nothing in the world is God. Don't worship them. But everything in the world is meant to turn to God in right praise. That's the purpose of creation is to turn to God in right praise. And who comes at the end of this procession? Well, there's the human beings, right? Adam and Eve. Who comes at the end of a liturgical procession but the priest or the bishop--the one who's gonna lead the praise. Ah. That's the idea. Dethrone all false claimants to divinity. Nothing in the world is God. Don't worship those things, but, rather, let all those things be part of a great chorus of praise led by human beings who can give voice to the praise of creation.

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Does that make sense? That's the biblical vision. That's the biblical vision. Right praise--I love this connection. The word adoration. From two Latin words or-- adoratio. Ad-ora. Ora means mouth,

right? Ad-ora is mouth to mouth. To adore God is to be mouth to mouth with God. It means lined up. Aligned, see, under the power of God. In that stance, we find who we are. Another little etymology thing--worship, right, our word worship. Go back now to, like, Chaucerian times. An older English form is "weorthscipe." What's of highest worth? That's what you worship.

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Now, again, listen to me, everybody, this is believer, nonbeliever, everybody--and this is religious person, atheist--everybody in this room worships something. There's something of highest worth to you. Remember beatitudo? Everyone is seeking happiness. Everyone. There's no way around that. What is that? What is it? And, see, the author of Genesis is saying don't let anything in the world be the object of your "weorthscipe" but God alone. Wealth, pleasure, honor, power. Any creaturely thing that will not lead you to the beatitudo that you want but only the right praise of God. And, can I submit to you, I think that's lesson one of the Bible. It's what the Bible's about from Genesis to Revelation. It's about right praise. And don't interpret that in a fussy way, but rather in this deep, sort of metaphysical way. Right praise means the right ordering of one's life.

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"Weorthsciping" God alone. When you do that, where do you live? In a garden. That means you live in a place of life. When you stop "weorthsciping" God alone, welcome to the desert. That's the biblical symbolism. Okay. So with all of that in mind, go back to Elijah and King Ahab. He says the trouble here, Ahab, is you're worshiping false gods. It's always the problem, right, fellow sinners? Right? That's always the problem. I'm "weorthsciping" something other than God. Well, is Ahab happy about this? No, no, no. He says get lost, you troubler of Israel. And Elijah--again, all we know about him is his name, but you know what his name means? It tells you everything. "Eliyahu" in Hebrew. Elijah. Eliyahu means "Yahweh is my God." See, his whole being is summed up in that. I don't worship anything or anybody but Yahweh.

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Yahweh's my God. Eliyahu. And so he prophetically challenges Ahab. And here's what he says. He says, look, you get all the priests and prophets of Baal-- so the gods that they were worshiping-- and let's all go to Mount Carmel. And I'm gonna go up there and let's have a challenge. And so the 450 priests of Baal go up Mount Carmel and then the one Elijah, right? Now in that there's an important lesson too. The avatars of the false gods are always thick on the ground. True then? Uh-huh. True today? Yes. Wealth, pleasure, honor, power, by the way, the avatars of those things, are they everywhere? Uh-huh. They're always thick on the ground. The representative of God tend to be a much smaller in number. So the one Elijah against the 450 priests of Baal. And then of course that wonderful story unfolds, which actually is quite funny.

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And the friends of mine who know Hebrew really well--I don't know it that well--will tell me that the humor really comes out in the Hebrew. Let me read you some of those lines. So the priests of Baal set up the altars, right? And then they begin to supplicate and to beg and to pray that their Gods will come and send fire to consume the sacrifice. Because that was a challenge, right? You call on your gods and see what happens and I'll call on mine, and we'll see which one responds, right? So they begin to beg and so on. And Elijah, around midday, begins to mock them because no fire is coming to answer their--he mocks them. Cry louder. Baal is a God, but, you know, he may be detained in talk. Or maybe he's lodging abroad. Or maybe he's on a journey. Or maybe he's fallen asleep and needs awakening. So he's mocking the priests of Baal. And now they're kind of stung by this and so then they take out swords, we hear, and they slash themselves 'til they bleed.

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That was a sign of greater supplication, right? And still they beg and still they cajole. And still no fire falls. Then Elijah comes forward to his altar and he says hear me, oh, Lord. Hear me. Prove to all

the people that thou art the Lord God and are calling their hearts back to thee. And with that, we hear the fire comes down, consumes the sacrifice, Elijah wins. Okay. But here's what I want you all to see, please. That this is not just a, you know, my God is bigger than your God. It's not just kind of a chauvinistic story. This is making the same point that Thomas Aquinas is making, it seems to me. Look, everybody's got a hungry heart, right? Bruce Springsteen taught us that. He's saying the same thing. Everyone's got a hungry heart. Everybody wants beatitudo. So what do we do? We "weorthscipe" something.

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Everybody does it. Paul Tillich, the Protestant theologian, said that all you need to know about a person you can learn by asking one question: what do you worship? It's dead right, it seems to me. Because your life will be organized around what you take to be the highest value. So think of the priests of Baal now. Think, if you want, of four altars erected to wealth, pleasure, power, honor. What do most of us sinners do most of the time is we hop around one or more of those altars. We "weorthscipe" one or more of these things. Everyone can tell the story, right? I know lots of young people that got very early on the train toward wealth, and they worshiped it. They devoted themselves to it. They hopped around the altar. Did it satisfy them? No. It can't, and we just saw why. See, because the hunger is infinite, and no amount of wealth is gonna satisfy that.

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So what happens then? You get addicted. You see why? I'm searching for wealth and I got it. I got my first million by 30 or whatever it is, you know. And I got a little buzz from that, as you do, but then the buzz wears off. It has to because you're not--you're not built for that. And when the buzz wears off, I better go back to that altar. I better keep "weorthsciping" there. I better keep hopping around that altar. And I get my first ten million by 40 or whatever goals you had, and the buzz comes back. But what will any addict tell you? We're all addicts in this room, by the way, because we're all sinners. What will any addict tell you? The buzz will wear off faster, right? And so now I panic. Remember the slashing themselves with the knives 'til they're bleeding. That we'll harm ourselves in the process of hopping around this altar.

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Power? Same thing. Same dynamic. Talk to people who very early on got hooked on power. That's what will make me happy, so I'm gonna "weorthscipe" at that altar. Beatitudo, man, it's power. That's what I want. And I get power-- Whatever it was I was going for by the age of 30, you know? And I get a buzz from it, but it wears off. It has to. So I get more and more and I hop and I cajole. And then before I know it I'm addicted to such a degree that I'm harming myself in the process. Same with honor. Talk to anybody who is on the train. I never get enough attention. They don't appreciate me. Why did he get that job? Why do I not have the honors I deserve? I've been "weorthsciping" at that altar all my life, people will say. It's not designed to satisfy you because beatitudo is not found there. What does Elijah represent?

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Again, don't think of it so much, you know, kinda chauvinistically and nationalistically. What does Elijah represent but the "weorthsciping"--the worshipping--of the true God. The infinite truth. The infinite goodness of God. When you order your life that way, listen now, the fire will fall. That's the point. Then the fire will fall because now you've hooked your infinite desire onto the properly infinite object, and the fire will fall and consume the sacrifice of your life and make it radiant and bring it to a heightened fulfillment. There's the Bible. That's the lesson the Bible has for us, which is as relevant in 2018 as it ever was. Because I can introduce you--you all know this, you do the same thing--introduce you to dozens and dozens of people that I know who are hopping around these four altars, right?

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It's only true "weorthscipe" that will give me satisfaction. Okay. I'm gonna make one more little step and then we'll bring it to a close. Here's where I think it gets really interesting. So. So. God alone will satisfy the deepest hunger of my heart. Okay, got that. I've gotta get God in me, right, to satisfy my desire for beatitudo. But who is God? In the biblical reading, God is love. Right? St. John tells us that. And that's a distinctively Christian idea because it's not that God simply loves or that God has the attribute of love, it's what God is. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, by the way--lover, beloved, and shared love. That's who God is is love. So here's the paradox. Only in God is my soul at rest. Only when I have God in me do I have beatitudo.

[00:39:02]

But God is love. Therefore, only when I give away what God gives me do I have the beatitudo that I seek. Love is willing the good of the other. Love is giving away, and so as the divine life comes into me, what do I do with it? Don't hang onto it. Now reread the prodigal son, if you want the physics there. Father, give me my share. Come into me. Give me, me, me. Give it to me so I can have it. What happens to him? It fritters away. Not arbitrary punishment. That's spiritual physics. You try to hang onto it, you lose it. But when you give away the divine life that's flowing into you, now it increases in you 30, 60, 100-fold. Right? You get the love that God is in you by giving it away.

[00:40:00]

You see why this Christian thing is so hard to get because it's so counterintuitive. Fellow sinners in this room, what's our hang up? Look, I'm unhappy. We all are, by the way. I don't mean psychologically depressed. I mean we're all unhappy. We're all unsatisfied in this room. So I know, I know. I'm missing something. That's it. I'm missing requisite wealth, pleasure, power, or honor, right? That's our instinct. I've gotta get more of that. I've gotta fill myself up. That's never the answer. That's never the answer. In fact, that's counter indicated. That will lead to addiction and unhappiness. Rather, contrive a way to give your life away. And you'll find the beatitudo that you're actually seeking. See what I'm saying about the questing mind and the searching heart, when they open up to the infinite source of love, that's when they find the beatitudo they seek. So how about I'll just give St. Augustine the last word.

[00:41:00]

If you go back to the great "Confessions" of St. Augustine, one of the, you know, masterworks of the Western world, page one you'll find this little pithy statement of Christian anthropology. "Lord, you've made us for yourself. Therefore, our heart is restless until it rests in thee." There's no better statement of what I've been trying to say all this talk. "Lord, you've made us for yourself." That's the infinite hunger. We're not like a dog, satisfies its basic needs and goes blissfully to sleep utterly happy. Terrific. That's what dogs designed for, but we're not designed that way. "Lord, you've made us for yourself." We've got an infinite longing. Therefore--this is beautiful in Augustine--our heart, he says. He doesn't say cordibus--our hearts. He says cor nostrum. See, what he means is we've all got this in common. This links everybody together. Cor nostrum--our heart--is restless until it rests in thee.

[00:42:04]

And that means conformed unto love. That's beatitudo. Thanks, everybody. Thanks for listening.

PERSON: Thank you, Bishop Barron.

ROBERT BARRON: Please.

PERSON: So we're gonna have Q&A right now so Davo is over there. He's gonna run around with a mic if there's any live questions, and I will read out some questions from the Dory. So let's start with one from the Dory. We have John Nolan in Mountain View asking, "When scientists and atheists talk about religion, they seem to be stuck rehashing debates of previous centuries--

evolution, age of the earth, heliocentrism. What can be done to convince science-minded skeptics that religious belief systems have something valuable to offer in the 21st century?"

[00:43:00]

ROBERT BARRON: Yeah. Good. It's a question I wrestle with all the time. First of all, all the things they've raised there, from my perspective as a Catholic, are nonissues. So, people go how old is the earth? Don't ask me. Ask a scientist. How do biological things develop? Don't ask me. Ask an evolutionary biologist. Those are scientific questions, properly so. The Bible is not science. The last book of the Bible is written around year 100 A.D. The first scientific text are in the let's say 16th century. The Bible is not science. It simply isn't. It's spirituality and theology making very profound observations that are truthful about the nature of the reality, but not in a scientific mode. So, first of all, to give science its total due that we're not in a conflictual relationship. But then the second move is this: to overcome our terrible tendency in our culture towards scientism. And scientism is the reduction of all knowledge to the scientific form of knowledge, right? So what the scientific method can give us--I love the scientific method. Look around us. I mean, what it's produced.

[00:44:01]

God bless it. But we shouldn't reduce all forms of knowledge to what can be delivered by the scientific method. Get out of Plato's cave--if you wanna go back to the "Republic" of Plato--get out of the realm of simply looking at shadows on the wall and come to much higher levels of reality accessed, I would argue, through metaphysics and through philosophy. And so there I would give science its total due, right? We're not at a conflictual game with the sciences, but also not to allow the sciences to draw everything into themselves. So that's a quick answer to a subtle set of questions there. Please.

PERSON: If anyone has a question, just raise your hand. Okay.

ROBERT BARRON: Please.

PERSON: So, beatitudo and the way you describe it with its necessary longing and desire and journeying towards it--Eastern ideas like the Four Noble Truths say that this is in fact something that we can move past, that it's not completely universal, and that moving past this desire and this longing is in fact a viable path towards enlightenment.

[00:45:09]

Is there a way to resolve those Eastern ideas with what you said today, or is that a fundamental difference?

ROBERT BARRON: Yeah, it's a good question. Of course, it would take us, you know, a year to search it out completely, but I think that's right. There's a key difference because it's the quieting of desire, you know. Nirvana, it's the blowing out of the candle of desire that is the goal of the Buddhist tradition. And desire, in a way, is the problem. You know, born of ego and so on. And so dependent co-origination and through intense meditation one finds that point of putting out desire. Where the Christian thing, and Augustine is typical here, is not putting out desire but awakening and directing desire appropriately. Now, I think we can play, as Thomas Merton did, the true self/false self game, and that's a good way, I think, to dialogue with Buddhism.

[00:46:01]

Is there a false self that's full of all kinds of weird and errant desires? Yeah. And that should be put to death. Blow that out if you want. Blow out the candle of that kind of desire, but I would say as a Christian there's not just that. There's also a properly directed desire, an awakened and heightened desire. But, yeah, you're on to, I think, a very fundamental point of demarcation. But I think true self/false self might give us a Christian analogy to the blowing out of errant desire. But we wouldn't

go so far as to say desire qua desire is the problem, it's--it's--de Lubac talks about this [speaking French], this weird kind of crippling of desire. That's the problem. But that's a great question, and it's the point of demarcation, I think. Please, go ahead.

PERSON: We have another question on the Dory.

ROBERT BARRON: Okay.

PERSON: From Mike Ryle in Mountain View.

[00:47:01]

"With the growth of technology in the development of a globalized community, what's the most important thing that we can do as a group of people dedicated to the advancement of technology to ensure that our ethical and moral growth as global population doesn't fall behind our technological growth?"

ROBERT BARRON: That's a really good-- that's a terrific question, and I'm glad it's raised. You understand the dynamic there that we get so enthusiastic about our technological advances--and, again, God bless them. They're wonderful, you know. But they must always be properly haunted by the moral question, and the moral question is the question of love, finally. I'll speak as a Christian. To love is to will the good of the other, right? Not my good through you, but your good. I want what's good for you. That's love. And love must always dominate. Love must always be the primary consideration, and so as our technology advances, is it in service of love? You know, St. Augustine said love God and do what you want.

[00:48:03]

His point there was as long as love is thoroughly dominant in your life, then the rest will take care of itself. So then your technological life will find its proper place. So that's terrific. I'm glad that ethical spiritual question is raised or else our technology will destroy us. Because that's the thing. Look at wealth, pleasure, honor, power. They'll turn on us. See, if we don't know how to manage them spiritually, they'll manage us. Again, sound familiar? Every sinner in this room including me, we know what that's about. They start managing us, you know? But we need to have the sovereignty of love and then these things find their proper place. That's good. Please. Go ahead, please.

PERSON: Hi. I think you might have already partially answered my question, but, you know, during the course of your talk it sounds as if, okay, there's the created world and ways to, you know, basically worship or love those things and then there's God.

[00:49:06]

And is there only--is there a way to love God? I mean, there's so many of us. We're all so different. Is there one way or is there--how do we find our way to love God? Is there--are there seven castles that we should be aware of, or are we so different that we have to make our own way?

ROBERT BARRON: That's good. I mean, you're talking there about the spiritual tradition, and you're making reference to actually to Teresa Ávila and so on--"The Interior Castle." And there are different paths the spiritual masters have laid out. And--we can find some of those general categories. Everyone is different. Everyone's got a unique personality. Everyone falls in love with God differently. I'll go back to St. John of the Cross, who's one of the great masters. John said don't use the image of climbing the holy mountain, which a lot of us will use. Like, you know, God's up there. I've gotta find my way to get to him.

[00:50:00]

But, rather, God wants nothing more than to move into your life in a saving way. Right? In a life giving way. So the idea of St. John of the Cross is to clear the ground so the helicopter can land. You know. So don't think I gotta get up the mountain and there's God distantly out there looking judgmentally at me as I strive to get up the mountain. Rather, no, God's, like, in a helicopter who wants to land in my heart, but there are obstacles in the way. There's stuff in the way. And I would say there's forms of false worship in the way. Clear those out so the helicopter can land. So it's like have the confidence that no, God wants in my heart. That's all he wants. You know? And if I just get out of the way enough, it'll happen. You know? Everyone got their own hangups and problems that they have to deal with, but I think that's a basic strategy. Please.

[00:51:00]

Is there--Melissa, go ahead.

PERSON: So I think we'll just do one more question from the Dory and one more live question, and then we'll call it. So, Eloisa Wolf from Mexico is asking, "How do you see our role as Catholic employees at Google?"

ROBERT BARRON: Well, she'd know better than I. She's an employee. You know, first of all, this: that you be a person of love. That whatever you find yourself--I go with the little flower, Thérèse of Lisieux, you know, her so called little way. Don't read that as something kind of twee and sentimental. The Little Way means in any situation, find the opportunity for love. And love, again, is not a sentiment. It means willing the good of the other. So wherever you are, in whatever condition--you're sick, you're in prison, you're at work, wherever you are, what's the path of love? Find it and walk it. So that's what I'd say to Catholics at Google is walk the path of love as fully as you can.

[00:51:59]

But then, you know, if you want to press the thing, always be open--as we hear in first Peter--to give a reason for the hope that's in you. So if someone is curious about your faith, your Catholicism, be ready to provide answers. We're going through kind of a golden age right now of apologetics. I think it's because of the new atheism. I think it awakened a lot of religious people to, you know, we gotta defend ourselves here and make the case to a skeptical public. So there's a lot of good material out there. Learn it so that when people approach you, maybe curiously, you have something to say to them. So that's two things. Love first and then be ready to give a reason for the hope that's in you. Please.

PERSON: Would you mind sharing with us one way in and which you've personally experienced God in your life?

ROBERT BARRON: Yeah. Well, I mean first and foremost every day when I say mass. I mean, it's the most powerful. But I'll tell you when I was 14, it was hearing one of Thomas Aquinas' arguments for God's existence. So I was a Catholic kid going to mass, but I wasn't all that interested in religion.

[00:53:02]

And I was a freshman in high school, and I see a Dominican in the back of the room--a Dominican friar in our religion class laid out for us one of Thomas' arguments. And, honestly, I never thought you could think about religion seriously. To me it was just like, "Yeah. I go to mass on Sunday," but I never thought about it until that moment. I thought, wow. That's a very intriguing presentation. And it led me on this quest that I'm still on, and that's quite true. That was [mumbling incoherently] years ago. But I've never left that path, and that's where I really say God--and I look at it now-- in a decisive way kind of entered my life and set me on a path that I'm still on standing before you today. God bless you all. Thank you very much for coming.

PERSON: Thank you.

PERSON: Thanks, Bishop.

[00:53:56]

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