



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 3:17-21

“Sent to Save”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are turning in our Scripture reading to verse 17 of John chapter 3, and reading verse 17 through verse 21 for our Scripture reading. Two weeks ago when I was here, we spent most of our time on John 3:16. But today we want to move on and consider these verses and our subject later on will be “Sent to Save.” But in the 17th verse -- and again, remember this too, that we are not absolutely certain whether these words are words that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus or whether they are words that the Apostle John is responsible for because the words of John merge imperceptibly into the words of our Lord and vice versa.

Many have suggested the reason for this is that the Apostle John, being a rather elderly man at this time, and having for a long time enjoyed the closest of relationships spiritually with the Lord, has just made the things that the Lord spoke to him his own words and consequently, he speaks them and one can hardly tell the difference between the words of the Lord and the apostle’s words. I think that’s rather nice, it just shows that over the years the Apostle John had grown through his fellowship with the Lord to the place where his words and our Lord’s words tend to merge.

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, (literally, ‘Has been condemned already,’) because he hath not believed in the name of the

only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, (now this word is a word that probably more easily means verdict in our language today, and this is the verdict,) that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God, (or literally again that they have been wrought in God.)”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. I guess you notice the author of the hymn that we have just sung was one of the Wesley's, excuse me. We try to keep from being sectarian in Believers Chapel and sing the Arminian hymns as well as the Calvinistic hymns so that some of you who have not yet embraced the sovereign grace of God will enjoy yourselves here as well.

You probably noticed, too, that Mr. Wesley in spite of the fact that he's generally associated with the Wesleyan Arminians, was a man who actually had many, many views that were very, very close to the views that the men who believed in sovereign grace had. In fact, Jim Packer, one of the outstanding Calvinists of today, has called Mr. Wesley really a Calvinist, but albeit a bit of a confused one. It's rather interesting too to remember that probably no evangelist was stronger in his evangelism and stronger in his Calvinism than George Whitefield and it was Mr. Wesley who conducted his funeral service. They were very, very close friends in spite of the fact that Mr. Whitefield did not mind writing him and telling him he was wrong and vice versa. So we just wanted you to feel ecumenical this morning and sing one of those good Wesley hymns and at the same time now turn to the Bible and hear the words of sovereign grace. [Laughter]

The subject for this morning is “Sent to Save.” Men question the gospel today and of course they ask primarily the question, “Is salvation necessary?” Some years ago I read a book by a man under whom I later studied in Europe. And in the midst of this book he said that if we question men about sin today we are likely as not to encounter the withering, supercilious challenge. Surely you're not going to raise that old bogie; sin, the mere moonshine of an antediluvian Calvinism. And

even grating in the fact of human frailty are not a banner and far for better than all the waters of Israel. Our native humanism better than any outmoded Jordan. Did not Spinoza and his ethics announce, “Evil is nothing positive.”

Well, today our churches are filled with people who do not have the sense of sin and as a result ecclesiastical orthodoxy today is sort of a crypto-Pelagianism. “We have churches,” wrote P. T. Forsyth, “of the nicest, kindest people.” I’ve cited this before here, “Who have nothing apostolical missionary, who never knew the soul’s despair or its breathless gratitude.” After all, when sin is rationalized away and we do not really think that we have it, then the doctrine of divine forgiveness through the grace of God is always going to appear somewhat irrelevant.

God’s way of piercing our armor is to show us the mess that we have made in this world, then to point us to the character of Jesus Christ and finally to cause us to reflect upon the significance of his cross. If there is anything that 20th Century man should realize is that the historical situation of the today is writing of the doctrine of original sin deep in our uneasy consciences because we have certainly in the 20th Century, and as we are drawing near it we have many illustrations, we’ve certainly, by our actions, done nothing more than underline the biblical doctrine of original sin.

So far as the character of Jesus Christ is concerned, when we think about forgiveness many people tend to reply, “Well, I may not be a saint but even though I’m not a saint at least I’m good as Mr. So-and-so or Mrs. So-and-so. But when we look at the life and character of Jesus Christ, that certainly causes that attitude to shrivel up into nothing. Iago said of Cassio in one of Shakespeare’s plays, “He hath a daily beauty in his life that makes me ugly.” And if any of us think for one moment that we are without sin, all we need to do is to stand in the presence of Jesus Christ and we will feel even worse than Iago did in the presence of Cassio.

Augustine in his early life, writing in his confessions, says that he was a self-indulgent young scholar at the University of Carthage, full of complacency and compromise. He said, “There sang all around me and my ears, a cauldron of unholy loves.” But one day Jesus crossed the path of the great

Augustine and he was humbled to the dust. And he expresses it this way in the confessions, “You took me from behind my own back where I put myself all the time that I preferred not to see myself. And you set me there before my face that I might see how vile I was. I saw myself and I was horrified.”

In the New Testament we read that after Peter denied the Lord Jesus that Jesus looked at Peter and Peter remembered. And he went out, this great, strong man, this great fisherman, went out and wept bitterly. That’s the kind of person that we are; pride is shattered by the holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. But when we come to the cross, what can we say about that? The cross is a picture of man’s sin. When Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Why, the answer of course is that he was dying as a judicial sacrifice for sin, and the reason that he’s there is because of human sin.

E. Stanley Jones who was not on the rolls of too many evangelical orthodox churches has a story of a man who was a government official in India. His work took him away from home, he was tempted, he fell into the ways of dishonesty and shame, he was unfaithful to his wife, and finally the burden of his guilt came home to him so significantly that he felt that it was necessary to confess it to his wife. And he called his wife into one of the rooms of the houses and he began unfolding the whole wretched story. And as the meaning of the words dawned on her, she turned as pale as death, staggered against the wall, and leaned there with tears on her face as though she had been struck with a whip. In that moment, the man said afterwards, I saw the meaning of the cross. I saw love crucified by sin.

One of the outstanding theologians of the 20th Century, the neo-orthodox Karl Barth has said, “Sin scorches us when it comes under the light of forgiveness. Sin scorches us then.” When we look at the cross and see the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who was the sin offering for us, then we have a picture of human sin because our sin made it necessary for that kind of death to take place. Forsyth said, “As a race we’re not even stray sheep, or wandering prodigals merely, we are rebels

taken with weapons in our hands.” That’s the picture of humanity. We do need a savior, desperately.

The clue to John 3:1 through 21, may well be the little phrase, “Man of the Pharisees,” because this chapter is an unfolding of all that was otherwise than that little phrase. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, who came to Jesus to ask him a few questions and preeminently the question of how he may have entrance into the Kingdom of God. Well, our Lord answers his question, asks him some, and the words then merge into the words of the Apostle John and in our last study we reached the 16th verse in which either John the apostle or our Lord said in the presence of Nicodemus perhaps, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

The salvation provided by the Lord Jesus Christ is not simply for Jewish people, it’s for Gentiles as well. You see, Nicodemus, being a ruler of the Jews, a man of the Pharisees, no doubt had the same conception of the work of God that others did of his nation. They expected two things from the coming of the Messiah. They expected the kingdom and they expected judgment. But they expected that the Kingdom would be given to Israel and they expected that the Gentiles would be judged. That was the way they had read the Old Testament. Now of course, the Old Testament does not really say that. The Old Testament, however, does say that salvation is of the Jews. The Old Testament tells us how God chose Abraham out of the gentiles and was completing a particular purpose with them. They were the ones through whom God was speaking to the world. But now the time of their ministry as the mediator of the revelation of God was coming to an end.

In fact, their work as the ones who were responsible for the Kingdom of God was coming to an end. Jesus said to them, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof. The gospel is going to move out from Israel to the entire world. This was something that was very difficult for them to grasp as things are often difficult for us to grasp, while we’re moving through them. He said, “I did not come to speak to Gentiles, I came to speak to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So there was every reason for some to be confused. If

they had studied the Scriptures, of course, they would have been delivered from it but it was very easy for them to be. I say all of this because it's very plain that in John 3:16 what the Lord or the apostle is saying is that, “God so loved the world, (that is, both Jews and gentiles,) that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16 in a nutshell is, Christ was given for believers in the whole world. That's very simply what is said,

Now the purpose of his coming is further explained in verse 16 and verse 17 as the 17th verse which begins with a “for” indicates. This “for” that begins verse 17, “For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved,” explains the “gave” of verse 16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” He gave the Son by sending him into the world.”

Now the purpose of his coming is expressed both negatively and positively. Negatively he did not come to judge. He could have come to judge. One thinks immediately of the fall in the Garden of Eden. And after Adam and Eve had sinned and the fall had taken place, God came down into the Garden of Eden, as was his custom, and Adam and Eve were fleeing from him. They were fleeing from him for the very reason that is given here, “Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, and neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.” He could have come down into that garden and destroyed Adam and Eve and he could have begun over again, looking at it from a purely human standpoint. But of course, we know that the purposes of God are from ages past and so he came down into the garden in order to announce judgment but at the same time to give the hope of salvation through the seed of the one who was to come. Fortunately he had not dealt with us after our iniquities, nor rewarded us according to our sins, for otherwise not a one of us would be saved. But positively he says he came to save the world. “He sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”

Now in our last study we pointed out a few things that I think I need to repeat because sometimes it takes a little while for things to sink in. We were talking about the word “world”, *kosmos*, and we pointed out in our last study that the common idea regarding the word “world” is that it refers to every individual equally, without exception, and without distinction. And that the love of God is the same for every person in every way, every person without exception and without distinction. Now we pointed out, tried to, that that’s not the truth of the Bible. That’s clear from the simple fact that the Apostle Paul says, “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.” That should shatter that idea.

Furthermore, the apostle wrote in Romans chapter 8, verse 32, “He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Evidently the universal redemptionist believes that he loved the world enough to have Christ die for every individual but not enough to send everyone the gospel. Not enough to give the Holy Spirit to apply the gospel. Not enough to give them faith. But Paul says if he has done the most for us, he surely will do everything else. He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? If he has done the most, he will do that which is lesser.

Now if to send his Son to die for everybody is the most that he could do, then everything else is subordinate to that. So to send the gospel to them, to give the Holy Spirit to apply the gospel, to give them faith, all of those are lesser things. So the argument of the apostle is most convincing to people who reason logically. I think it should be plain. If someone should say, “Oh, but Paul is talking only about us believers,” well of course I agree. But the principle still holds. “He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” Now it’s obvious he’s not given everybody the opportunity to hear the gospel. Everybody the ministry of the Holy spirit in conviction, regeneration, repentance and faith, so it should be evident that the purpose of his atoning death is a limited purpose.

God’s love, I sought to show, is eternal and immutable for the redeemed. Since this attribute of the love of God is eternal, infinite, and immutable how can it be that the same for those who are saved and those who are lost? Shall he love the lost in the Lake of Fire with the same love that he has for his own? When John says, “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end,” is he speaking about everybody there in that context? I challenge you to read the Bible and ponder it in the light of it. Know the Bible speaks of a non-redemptive, general, benevolent love, directed through the providence of God to all men as his creatures. He has that kind of love for all men. But there is also a special sacrificial redemptive love directed through regenerating grace toward the chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. I would ask you to look again at this text, “Christ was sent that the world might be saved through him.”

If the world, meaning every individual, were not saved, then the god that we worship would be a God who has purposes that are not accomplished. What does the Bible say about our God, however? What kind of god do we have? One who is frustrated by men, one who cannot accomplish his purposes? One who may send Jesus Christ in to save the world but the world is not saved, do we have such a god? Do you worship such a god as that? Your god is too small. Your god is too impotent. Your god is not the God of the Bible. Listen to what the Bible says about the God of the Bible, “For the Lord of hosts have purposed, and who shall annul it. And his hand is stretched out and who shall turn it back?” Shall we add, a man may turn it back? Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, “My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure unless man objects and resists.”

In the great 53rd chapter of Isaiah when the prophet speaks of the redeeming, suffering servant of Jehovah he says, “He shall see of the travail of his soul and he shall be satisfied.” Well, partially; some shall resist and turn away. So he shall be partially satisfied. No, no, the Bible says he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. This is the God we worship, an omnipotent God, and immutable God, an infinite God. And his love for his people is an infinite, eternal, immutable love. Unchangeable and shall ever be the love of a sovereign God. How wonderful to be the object

of that love. How wonderful to be the object of that love. How wonderful to know that our future, our everyday life, is in the hands of such a sovereign God as that. How great it is to be a member of his family such a God.

You know, I've thought a lot about this through the years, it took me ten or fifteen years to come to this because I really was in a situation where I was opening the Greek New Testament everyday, teaching Greek exegesis to young men, and I was troubled over this. It always disturbed me right from the time I was born again I believed that God was sovereign but all of my friends, they believed that we could resist. His purposes could not be accomplished. That troubled me a great deal. I felt I was too little to go against those that had been my teachers but the more I puzzled over these matters, the more I became convinced that what the Scriptures were saying were something a little bit different. The term “world”, well that puzzled me a great deal for I had just had engraved into me “world” must mean every single individual without exception, without distinction. I didn't do the one thing that we ought to do. That's just to pull down the concordance, take a look at that word. I was startled.

Well I knew that there was some different senses of the term “world” but I did not realize the extent of these differences. One may look in the Gospel of John and turn to chapter 12, in verse 19, chapter 17, verse 9, chapter 6, verse 33, where Jesus says he gives life to the world. And then it began to dawn on me that when John used the term world in texts like this, that he was talking about the breadth of the gospel. It goes out to the world, not simply to the Jews, but to the Gentiles as well. And then I began to understand what John the Baptist meant when he says, “Behold, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.” Not everybody's sin, but the sin of Jews and Gentiles. The Lord is called the savior of the world, not the possible savior of the world. Not that he might be a savior of the world, but the savior of the world. How ridiculous for the savior of the world to be called the savior of the world when he doesn't save the world. But he does save the world.

The people of God as even Caiaphas said under the inspiration of the Spirit which he didn't understand, “He died not only for the nation, but to gather together the people of God who are scattered abroad, the world.” Do you know that in this very text John 3:17 the word “world” occurs three times and each time it had a different sense, did you look at it? That's our problem, that's our basic problem. We don't study the Bible. Isn't that strange? We don't study the Bible. Now I shouldn't be flailing away at people in Believers Chapel because as a rule you study the Bible more than any congregation I know of. Yesterday I received a call from a young pastor in a city in Arizona. He said, “We have been listening to the Tape Ministry at Believers Chapel and we are amazed. He said, “Is this the kind of ministry that is given in Believers Chapel on Sunday morning?” I said, “Yes, that's it.” He said, “I'm amazed, I'm amazed. This is what we would like to have in our congregation.” He's a recent graduate of Trinity Seminary in Chicago a few years back. And he said, “But people are not expounding the Scriptures.” He said, “Even when the men from headquarters come down,” not talking about the seminary, but his own church, “when they come down they just give little ditties.” [Laughter]

And then he asked something about the size of the chapel and about the meetings we have and he mentioned Sam and I said, “Yes, Sam Storms teaches our adult Sunday School class.” He said, “Sunday School class? Exposition of the world of God like that in a Sunday School class, I'm amazed.” Well that's what he wants in his own congregation so I shouldn't be saying things like that to you about studying the Bible but, well you're sitting out in front of me, you just pass it off to somebody else. But look at this text for a moment, look at verse 17, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”

Now looking at this particular verse in the first instance we read, “For God sent not his Son into the world,” what does the world mean then? Why, it refers to that part of the habitable world where the Lord Jesus Christ ministered. He sent not his Son into the world. Not into the whole world, but into the habitable part of the world in which our Lord ministered. Then he said, “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world,” and here we may say the world means all

men in the world. He didn't come to condemn all because condemnation was not his prime aim, he came to save his own. And then the third occurrence, “But that the world might be saved,” is a reference to the chosen believers of God who are living in the world. So he does not fail of his purpose. So three times in the 17th verse the word “world” occurs and in each of the three times it contains a different sense. The senses of terms are derived from usage. And when we read, “For God so loved the world,” we mean he loved the world of Jews and gentiles. So much that he gave Christ for believers. Now he says then that the purpose of his coming was not to condemn but it was to save.

The principle of his judgment is spoken of in verse 18. There is an inevitable result of his coming even though judgment was not his purpose he says and this is the judgment. I really should speak about verse 18 for a moment because he says in verse 18, “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Here we have justification by faith and we have condemnation by unbelief. He that believeth on him is not condemned. But he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Now when he says here, “He that believeth on him is not condemned,” or, “Is not judged,” he emphasizes the enduring character of the fact that the believer is not being judged. Now notice that it is for the one who believes on him. Now there are different usages in the New Testament and specifically in the Gospel of John of the verb “to believe” with prepositions that follow. Let me just illustrate. If I were to say to you something like, “Well, the Dallas Cowboys are probably the most disciplined team in the national football league,” you might say, “I believe you.” And if you believed me you would simply be giving credence to what I was saying. You were acknowledging the truthfulness of that statement. Now that kind of expression in Greek is a kind of expression that we find in the Gospel of John, we find it in the New Testament. It's the use of the verb *pisteno* with the dative tense of the person that is believed, I believe him or I believe that statement.

But there is a rather unique usage. It's unique because while it is found elsewhere rarely it's John particularly who uses this expression. Instead of *pisteno* plus the dative he uses *pisteno* plus the preposition *eis*, or to literally believe into, but now that's forcing the Greek a bit. What it really means is to have confidence in as over against giving credence to. So when we read for the expression is used here, “For God sent not his,” well verse 18, “He that believeth on him,” the reference is to having confidence in him. To rely upon him. To rely upon him in what sense? Well, to rely upon him as the Son of God who offered the atoning sacrifice. To be saved through reliance upon him. The Council of Trent said that, “Cursed is the one who thinks that a person is saved by reliance upon Jesus Christ alone.” Well that is what John is saying he that believeth on him, he that relies upon him, he that relies upon him as the Son of God who has offered the atoning sacrifice. He stops relying upon anything else; his church membership, his culture, his education, his good works, his observance of the ordinances or whatever it may be and relies upon Jesus Christ. At that moment he has expressed faith in him and he's incorporated into the family of God, as a child of God, having been born of God.

So he that believeth on him, relies upon him, relies upon him and his sacrifice. Now that's a very simple thing to express but that's the essence of faith in Christ. Now notice he emphasizes believing. He doesn't say understands. “He that believeth on him and understandeth the nature of his sacrifice to the fullest.” No, the emphasis is on believing, not full understanding. Most of us, as long as we're here in the flesh, are growing in understanding of all that Jesus Christ has accomplished. We never understand fully what it meant for Jesus Christ to go to the cross. As we read and study the Bible we learn other things and the more we understand the more we come to love him because the more we see of the love that he's manifested toward us.

None of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through, ere he found the sheep that was lost. Fortunately we are saved by faith, not by understanding. We have to have some understanding but not by full understanding.

Now he speaks of the condemnation of unbelief. “But he that believeth not is condemned already,” not is going to be condemned, but he is already condemned.

In fact, everybody is already condemned. We are born condemned. We are by nature children of wrath, the apostle said. Almost heard Paul behind me visibly saying, “Preach it, Lewis.” [Laughter] Those are his words. By nature children of wrath, we’re born condemned. No one deserves to be in heaven, not a person. The only person who ever lived a perfect life is the Lord Jesus Christ. We all deserve to be in hell. When we are finally able to sit in an audience like this and say, “If God should save the person sitting next to me and pass me by, sending me to hell, he would be perfectly righteous then we have an understanding of what the Bible teaches about the nature of man and his condemnation. And the fact that he has singled out in his distinguishing grace some that’s caused for gratitude and thanksgiving and holy joy, that’s magnificent. But it’s grace. The Jews made the term by which men receive the benefits of the work of Christ, belonging to a certain nation. Romanists have made it church membership, and the observance of the sacraments of the church. Protestants have often made it birth in a Christian home or in a Christian church. But Jesus Christ says, “He that believeth has everlasting life, shall not be condemned. He that believeth not has already been condemned.”

And finally he speaks of the product of the Son’s coming in the last three verses, we can pass them by rather quickly because they are very much to the point, “This is the verdict, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness.” You know, you can put that phrase by the phrase in verse 16, “God loved the world, men loved darkness.” Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. That is one of the reasons why we have a problem with the distinguishing grace of God. We don’t really like it. We are not willing to make a change in our thinking. I recur to the famous statement that Irving Kristol made, “When we lack the will to see things as they really are, there is nothing so mysterious as the obvious.” Let me say it again, “When we lack the will to see things as they really are, there is nothing so mysterious as the obvious.” Three times won’t hurt. [Laughter] “When we lack the will to see things as they really are, there is nothing so mysterious as

the obvious.” The Bible obviously teaches the distinguishing grace of God. But when we lack the will to see it, it all seems so mysterious.

This is the condemnation that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Fundamentally, men love their wickedness, love their worthlessness. And therefore, they hate the light and they don't come to it. Unbelief, you see, is not only intellectual, it's moral. We're like insects, and spiders, and roaches; they love the night. Have you ever turned on the light in your bathroom at 2 o'clock in the morning and see a little animal slide under the door or behind something? It's been out while you've been sleeping, it was nighttime. Roaches. In Charleston, South Carolina, my hometown, it's on the coast. There are some wharfs there. We have Texas sized roaches. They are that long, they fly, they fly in the room. You can shoot some down with a gun. [Laughter] They fly across the room and stop up on the ceiling. It's a fearful thing. [Laughter] Don't see them in the daytime though, it's in the nighttime that you see them.

So John says, “The light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” They are insects, roaches, spiders. Those that do the truth, they come to the light in order that their deeds may be manifest, that they have been wrought in God. We don't work them, they are wrought in us by God. And we continually come because we desire the purification that comes from coming to the light. What a beautiful little pattern. We love our evil, we hate the light, we don't come. But those in whom the transformation has taken place, whose lives are then characterized by progress in divine holiness, love the light and come to the light. I'm sure that our Lord had Nicodemus in mind. Nicodemus had come to him in the darkness and he just reminded Nicodemus, “Nicodemus, come to the light, you're in the midst of the light now. Leave the darkness come to the light and come to salvation.”

What folly it is to walk around in the dark when you can walk around in the light. The darkness is the place of discomfort, the darkness is the place of danger, the darkness is the place of stumbling. What folly it is to walk in darkness when we can walk in light. And furthermore, when

we realize that the Apostle Paul has said that a day is coming in which Jesus Christ is going to judge secretes of men through the gospel that Paul preached, or according to the gospel that Paul preached.

One of my old theology professors used to say, “Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven.” I don’t know whether that’s true now, but the time is coming when we shall all stand before the Lord God and the secrets of our heart shall be unfolded and the roaches and the spiders and the insects of our lives shall come into plain view and how terrible if they’ve never been covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

I’ve enjoyed thinking about the early life of the colonists. George Whitefield, as you know, is one of my favorite men. Mr. Whitefield was one day preaching on Market Street in Philadelphia from the balcony of the courthouse and in the midst of his sermon he suddenly stopped and he looked toward heaven and he said, “Father Abraham, who do you have in heaven? Any Episcopalians? No? Any Presbyterians? No? Any Baptists? No? Yes? No? [Laughter] Have you any Methodists there? No? Have you any independents or seceders? No? No, no. Why, who have you then?” And the word came from heaven in Mr. Whitefield’s voice, “We don’t know those names here, all that are here are Christians, believers in Christ, men who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony.” And then Mr. Whitefield said, “Oh, is this the case, then God help me. God help us all to forget party names and to become Christians in deed and in truth. Come to the light, come to the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. Come to the light of the saving sacrifice, rely upon him. Stop relying upon anything else, have your confidence in him, he’ll never disappoint you. He accomplishes all his purposes, he’s the sovereign, immutable, infinite, eternal God, he’s sufficient for all of the problems of life, all of the tragedies of life, all of the experiences of life, and for eternal life with him. Come to the light.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for the greatness of our God. We thank Thee for the self-existent, eternal, immutable, infinite, triune God. Our confidence, Lord, is in Thee. We

rely upon Thee and the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, applied by the third person of the Trinity. We rest in what Thou hast done. O God, if there should be someone here who has not yet come to Christ, give them no rest, nor peace until they come to him. O, may they come to the light to be cleansed, to be forgiven, to be justified...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]