



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 7:25-31

“From Nazareth, Yet From the Father”

TRANSCRIPT

[Audio begins] This morning our Scripture reading is from John chapter 7, verse 25 through verse 31, and we are continuing that part of the Gospel of John which has to do with our Lord’s ministry at the Feast of Tabernacles. And now we are speaking of ministry that came to pass during the celebration of that feast. In verse 25 the apostle writes,

“Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Messiah cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am:”

Now it is possible to take this text as it is taken in the Authorized Version, which I’m reading, as a declarative statement. But it’s also possible to take it in other ways. It’s possible to take those statements as questions. For example, “do you know me, do you know whence I am?” And then it is possible, as most of the students of this gospel take it, to take them ironically. It’s almost as

if “you say, you both know me and you know whence I am, but you really don’t.” And that I think is the sense of it, “you both know me and you know whence I am,

“Yet I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?”

May the Lord bless this reading from his Word.

Professor James Stewart, a man under whom I studied many years ago at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, has said in one of his sermons that the personal relationship to Jesus Christ is the beating heart of the faith. And I’m sure that as we read the things that the Lord Jesus has said in the Scriptures, one sees that truth confirmed. The Lord Jesus does not say, as other teachers sometimes say, the truth is everything but I am nothing, rather he says, “I am the truth.” He does not suggest answers to the world’s enigmas and suggest cure-alls for all of the problems of life, but claims himself to be one. In fact, he says, “Come unto me and I will give you rest.” He doesn’t offer guidance of a code or a philosophy to keep men right through the uncertainties of the unknown future. He says simply, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The apostles also, it seems to me, confirm this. They speak about the fact that the beating heart of the faith is the relationship to the Lord Jesus in a personal way. For example, the apostle, writing in Philippians chapter 1 and verse 21 says, “For me to live is Christ.” He says in Galatians chapter 2 and verse 20, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me. And the life that I live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” In the preceding chapter of the Gospel of John the Apostle Peter, when many of the Lord’s disciples went back and began to walk no more with him, and when Jesus said to the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” replied, “Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

Luther said, “Christians must begin from the wounds of Christ.” Charles Wesley’s great hymn, Jesus Lover of My Soul, has this part of a stanza, “Thou oh Christ art all I want, more than all in Thee I find.”

We often speak about doctrine in Believers Chapel and I must confess I think that is the place where we should begin. No one knows who Jesus Christ is if he doesn’t understand the doctrine of Christ. But we also must remember that it’s not simply the knowledge of the doctrine, but the knowledge of the doctrine and of the person of whom the doctrine speaks. So we must enter into the experience of the life revealed by the teaching of the word of God. There are individuals who often criticize those who like doctrine by saying that what we want is not doctrine but life, and I hope by now in Believers Chapel we’ve learned that that is absolutely wrong; we want doctrine and we want life. The Bible is a collection of statements of biblical doctrine. And if you want to divide the text of Scripture into verses, then of course we have just so many teachings, or doctrines, in the word of God. But let us not forget that we do not realize the fullness of the teaching of the word of God until we have entered to some extent, and of course we want to more and more in extent, the personal relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is Jesus Christ the kind of person to whom we can entrust our souls? We therefore have to face the question, “What think ye of Christ?” Who’s son is he? Now Jesus has just finished justifying his doctrine and justifying his life. He said as a matter of fact, “My doctrine is not mine; it belongs to him that sent me.” And furthermore, he goes on to say, “He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory, but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true and no unrighteousness is in him.” In other words, my doctrine is not mine, it comes from the Father. And I do not seek my own glory as other teachers may, but I seek the glory of him who has sent me. So he has justified his doctrine and his life by pointing away from himself during his mediatorial life.

Now he will justify his origin, for men were asking questions concerning his origin. There was speculation over his identity. In the 25th verse of John chapter 7 we read, “Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?” Now if you’re reading the Bible carefully,

and you ought to read the Bible carefully, you notice that the 25th verse mentions “some of them of Jerusalem.”

Now we have three different groups in this chapter. If you read it carefully you’ll notice the different groups of people. For example, in verse 1 we read of the Jews who seek to kill him, verse 11, “Then the Jews sought him at the feast and said, Where is he?” That is an expression that refers to the Jewish people of the city, and of the country, who were in authority, the leaders in jury. Then there is another group mentioned in verse 20, “The people answered and said, Thou hast a demon, who goeth about to kill Thee?” Now that word we pointed out last week was the word that means simply a multitude. In verse 31 we read, “And many of the people believed on him.” Remember it was the time of the feast of the tabernacles and so many people had come from the outlying country. They did not know about the plotting of the Jewish leaders, that’s why they asked the question, “Who goeth about to kill Thee?” These were many Jewish people who came to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. And then in verse 25 we have a third group mentioned, “Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?” They were not in on the plotting, though they were of Jerusalem. And so they asked the question, “Is not this” the individual, that the leaders are seeking to kill, we’ve heard of their plots.

Now we must, if we’re to understand this passage, keep these different groups in mind. They had been impressed by his manner, and they were also impressed by the fact that here is the person against whom the leaders are plotting, and he’s here in the midst of us and he’s preaching openly and publicly in the temple and the Jews who are plotting to kill him, the leaders, they are not doing anything about it. Now one of two things must be true; either they’re afraid of him, or, afraid of him in the sense that the people might do something about it, or is it perhaps true that they have come to the conviction that he really is the Messiah after all? Now that is phrased in a negative way, and so we read, “Do the rulers indeed know that this is very Christ?” We would say in English something like, it isn’t that they really have come to know that this is the very Christ is it? And then the people of the city of Jerusalem remember some traditions concerning the Messiah and

immediately they say, in verse 27, “Howbeit, we know this man whence he is, but when the Messiah cometh no man knoweth whence he is.” It was a tradition among the Jews that the Messiah thought born in Bethlehem, should remain unknown until Elijah came and anointed him, revealing to him the Messiah, that he was the Messiah, and also to his people. Justin Martyr, one of the early apologists for Christianity, has the Jewish man in his dialogue with Trifile say just that, evidence of the fact that this was Jewish viewpoint.

Now, if it were true that the Messiah were to come suddenly, then this statement, “We know whence he is, but when Messiah cometh no one knoweth whence he is” would’ve posed a problem to them. We know him, we know he’s from Galilee, and Nazareth. We know furthermore his own father and his mother, they’ve already said that back in chapter 6, “Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?” So here is something of a problem. How can they think that he’s the Messiah, possibly, if we know all about him? In other words, their thinking was something like this. Major premise: no one will know where the real Messiah comes from. Minor premise: we know where Jesus comes from. Conclusion: therefore Jesus cannot be the real Messiah.

Now of course both of the premises were false. In the first place, it is not true according to the Scriptures that no one knows where the Messiah comes from. As a matter of fact, the Bible says very plainly that the Messiah shall be born in Bethlehem. It gives a lot of other interesting information about him, and in a moment we’ll point out how the Old Testament revealed the precise time that he would come and be cut off. So the idea that he should come suddenly, wholly unexpectedly, is not a biblical doctrine, although it was a rabbinic doctrine. The Sanhedrin for example, said three things come wholly unexpected; the Messiah, a godsend, and a scorpion. [Laughter] That say three things come unexpectedly; the Messiah, a godsend, and crickets in your bedroom. Now I’m rather sensitive about that, because I just killed one in my bedroom this morning. [Laughter] These things come suddenly; jury duty, a Texas Ranger’s baseball victory [Laughter], Charlie Brown winning a baseball game, Arminians abandoning free will [Laughter], and

accepting the apostolic doctrine, a DTS student confused about his dispensations. All of these would be rather unusual thing. [Laughter] You know we have a saying, which we sometimes use, we say about an individual, he’s not thinking he’s only rearranging his prejudices. [Laughter] Well that is really what they were doing.

Now, I would imagine that the Lord Jesus had the experience that most people have who try to teach the word of God extremely often. Have you ever felt, if you’ve ever tried to teach, that when you finished a lesson, you’ve given a lesson, you’ve spent a great deal of time on it, you’ve analyzed the problem whatever it may be, you think very properly, you’ve taught it as clearly as it could be taught, you think. And then when the meeting is over and everybody begins to leave, someone will come up and ask you a question, and by the very question that is asked you, you know they’ve missed the whole point of the lesson. The tendency is for people to say, “Well he just didn’t communicate it well.” No, no, no one ever communicated any better than the Lord Jesus Christ. No one ever spoke more plainly and clearly and to the point, but probably no one ever had more completely the response, “I don’t understand what he’s talking about.” And even the apostles themselves we saw in the last chapter, they say, “This is a hard saying, who can bear it?” And then later on we’ll see that he will talk about going away and they’ll stop and talk among themselves. He’ll say, “He says he’s going away, what does he mean by that?” So our Lord Jesus was a person who was not understood, and yet he was a great communicator. The difficulty is of course in ourselves. We need the illumination from the Holy Spirit that comes as our minds and hearts are prepared to receive the message that comes concerning him.

Well, our Lord hears them speaking, “We know this man, whence he is, but when the Messiah cometh no man knoweth whence he is.” Then our Lord Jesus “cried out” we read in verse 28 “in the temple.” Now if you’ll go back and read the Gospel of John and notice the places where we read “Jesus cried out” almost always they introduce sayings of unusual importance, “Then Jesus cried out in the temple saying, You know me and you know whence I am” ironically, “I’m not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.” In other words, the Lord Jesus says, “I

do not have a self-chosen task. I have come because the Father has sent me and I have come with a commission from him. It is not something I originated. It is something that is given me by God in heaven.”

Now in verse 28 and verse 29, 29 particularly, he speaks about his knowledge of God and his origin from God, and that’s the reason the sermon is entitled this morning “From Nazareth, and Yet from the Father.” Listen, “But I know him, for I am from him, and he has sent me.” Now we know from the teaching of the word of God that it is the prerogative of God alone to know God. The reason for that is very plain. No one can know the infinite who is not himself infinite. God is the infinite God, therefore it is impossible for us to know of ourselves the infinite God. There are certain things about this God that may be revealed to us by the infinite God, but we cannot of ourselves know God. Job said, “Can we find out God by searching, of course not” but Jesus says “I know him.”

Now the Apostle Paul in one of his epistle, the Epistle to the Corinthians, the first of them, in the 2nd chapter in the 11th verse of that 2nd chapter, makes a statement along these lines. He says, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him?” No one can know the things of Lewis Johnson except the spirit of Lewis Johnson within him. No one can know the things of your spirit except your spirit, and unless we reveal ourselves to each other. “Likewise,” Paul says, “the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” So no one can know the things of God except the infinite God himself. The Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 11, in one of the great sayings I referred to back a week or two ago, has made another statement very much like that, for he has said, “All things are delivered unto me of my Father and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” In other words, no one knows the Father except the Son, and the person to whom the Son reveals, wills to reveal the Father. In other words, any knowledge of God that we have is the direct result of the willing of the Son of God. It is he who has determined that we know anything that we really know about the Lord God.

Now Jesus said, “I know him.” What a magnificent claim that is, “I know him.” That verb in the original text incidentally, is not the verb used in Matthew chapter 11, the verb of the knowledge that we gain through experience, but it’s the verb that generally refers to knowledge that is reflective in nature, inherent knowledge, “I know him.” He speaks out of his divine origin, “I know him because I am eternally generated by the Father as the eternal Son. I know him.”

Peter, in one of his epistles, makes the statement, “He the just died for the unjust that he might introduce them to God.” That was one of the purposes of our Lord’s death; that we might know God. You know when I was growing up, when I was a teenager, if in my crowd of young men, if there was a lovely young lady that came on the scene from in some way or another, we might look around and say, “Do you know her?” And if someone said, “I know her” we would say, “Introduce me.” Peter says, “He died the just for the unjust that he might introduce us to God.” Would you like to know Jesus Christ? Would you like to be introduced to him? The Scriptures in the hands of the Spirit are the means by which you may be introduced to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now he says, “I know him because I am from him.” In other words, when you say you know you know whence I am, that I’m from Nazareth, that I’m from Galilee, that my father is Joseph, my mother is Mary, you know some part of my origin, but you don’t know the most significant part of my origin. I know him because I am from him. I am from Nazareth. I am from the home of Joseph and Mary. I am from Galilee, but I am also from heaven. I am from him.

That’s of course a statement of the preexistence of the Son of God. The Apostle Paul again teaches the same thing in Colossians chapter 1 and verse 17, where he says in his great Christology, “He is before all things, and by all things, and before all things, all things hold together in him.” As one of the commentators has said, “He who is from God was originally with God. And being with God he has come from God and now he is with us.”

And finally, in the 29th verse he says, “And he hath sent me.” We sometimes think of the statements of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew chapter 28 as being the great commission, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel. Teach the things that you have been taught, baptize in the

name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” That is a great commission. It’s one that we’re engaged in fulfilling, but the great commission is this one: He hath sent me. Paul says in Galatians, “When the fullness of time was come God sent forth his Son born of a woman, born unto the law that he might redeem those who were under law that they might receive the adoption of sons.” That is the great commission. What a magnificent clarification of the origin of our Lord this statement is.

“We know him, whence he is” but they only knew the half of it. I’m afraid a lot of us are like that, when it comes to spiritual things. We tend to think we do have the knowledge of things, when we know really only the periphery of things. They knew he was from Nazareth. They knew he was from Joseph. They knew his mother’s name was Mary. They knew those things about him, but oh they missed the most important thing about him; that he was from the Father. And that the Father had sent him with a commission, and he as mediator was going to carry out that commission. That’s the greatest thing that you can learn about Jesus Christ.

Well, what would you expect men to do, having heard that magnificent revelation in the power of the Holy Spirit, for Jesus always spoke in the power of the Holy Spirit, would not men respond? Are we not told that when love is felt the message is heard? Yes we are told that, but that’s human tradition, that’s not biblical tradition. The biblical tradition is that when the truth comes to sinful men it causes a division. And so we read in verse 30, “Then they sought to take him, but no man laid hands on him because his hour was not yet come.” And many of the people believed on him. You see the message of the Lord Jesus Christ created a division.

The other day, after the message last week or the week before, when I finished the message several came up to me and said, “Where is that text in the Bible that says that Jesus brought division and that he expected to bring division?” Well, this is it, in Luke chapter 12 the Lord Jesus says, “I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?” Why did the Lord come? Did he come to give peace on earth? Did he come to

carry out a ministry so that we'd all come into proper adjustment to God? Did he come to solve our problems? Well he doesn't say that,

“Did I come to give peace on earth? I tell you, No; but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

These are the words of the one who came from the Father in heaven. He came to bring division. Division caused by the fact that men are sinners and that no one will respond apart from the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Men react negatively to the truth that you must be born again. They react negatively to the fact that we are sinners, that we are under divine guilt and condemnation and that the only source of salvation is the Lord Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth and Galilee, ministered out of Capernaum, and ultimately was crucified by the Jews on a cross at Calvary. Men react negatively to that. They react negatively to the idea that it is not membership in a church, it is not good works, it is not the observance of the sacraments, it is not culture, it is not education. They react negatively to the gospel that the only source of salvation is the Lord Jesus Christ and the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. He brings division. He kindles fire, fire in families, “mother against daughter, daughter against mother; father against son, son against father; father against” even wife. And there was a division.

Then they sought to take him to arrest him. “No man laid hands on him because his hour was not yet come.” Isn't that interesting, “his hour was not yet come.” What was his hour? Well you see people don't study the Bible as they ought to, because Daniel, back in one of those chapters in his prophecy, Daniel too, like our Lord, was a very poor communicator. Have you ever tried to read the prophecy of Daniel? Listen, at Trinity Seminary or at any theological seminary for that

matter, when you turn to the Book of Daniel and you seek to expound it you will notice that even students in theological school find it extremely difficult. Wonder why the Lord didn't give us the word of God in proper, according to proper principles of communication. That is to make it so simple that there is nothing there at all pabulum. Well because he's interested in his saints studying the Scriptures and growing in the knowledge of the word of God and giving something deeper than the superficial shallow thing that we have today.

Daniel gave a prophecy of seventy weeks. And in this prophecy of seventy weeks he said that at the beginning of it, from the time of the conclusion of the seventy weeks, four hundred and ninety years it turns out to be, in that period of time we would have the times of the Gentiles and the Gentiles would be in authority in the earth. At the conclusion of that time the kingdom upon the earth would be established. Now he distinguished between sixty-nine of the weeks and the last week of seven years, and he said at the end of the four hundred and eighty-third year the Messiah would be cut off.

Now if you had been studying the Scriptures and you were living in the day of the Lord Jesus and you were reading Daniel and you had pondered it and pondered it, you would have come to the conclusion that the four hundred and eighty-third year is drawing to an end. And in just a few months after this the Messiah shall be cut off. So when we read here, “Then they sought to take to arrest him and no man laid hands on him because his hour was not yet come.” To put it in the language of Scripture, the sixty-ninth week of Daniel is not yet over. And you would have known that they would not be able to take him yet. It's not until the four hundred and eighty-three years pass that the Messiah shall be cut off. You would have known that. Now John tells us that. He says, “They sought to take him, no man laid hands on him because his hour was not yet come.”

I read in a Bible study magazine some years ago this statement, “The Lord died a premature death.” Ridiculous, he died at the precise time, not only that God intended, but the precise time that Daniel prophesied.

Robert Dick Wilson was one of the great students of the Scriptures in the last generation. He was a tremendous scholar, an Old Testament scholar, he taught at Princeton Theological Seminary. And when he was a very young boy he divided his life up into three periods of twenty years each. He determined that he would first of all devote twenty years to study, twenty years to teaching, and twenty years to writing. He planned his life this way. And he was very young when he did make this determination, and he sought to carry it out. He studied for twenty years. He taught for twenty years. And when the twenty years was up he retired, intending to devote the final twenty years of his life to writing. But unfortunately, it was Robert Dick Wilson who had plotted his life, and it was not the Lord. The Lord had plotted it differently. He had given him those early years and he'd given him twenty years of study and twenty years of teaching, and when he resigned from his teaching post, shortly afterwards he was in the presence of the Lord. You see our times are not necessarily the times of the Lord.

Now when we read here, “No man laid hands on him because his hour was not yet come” we have something I think that is rather significant for us. Of course this has primary reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, but as one of the commentator's reasons, and I think correctly, we may reason from the principles guiding his life to the principles that guide our lives. For you see, our Lord had determined the life of the mediator, and the Lord has determined the lives of each one of us. We don't know what the future holds. I may not be here next week. As a matter of fact, I may not only not be here I may not be on the earth. I may be with the Lord. I'm sorry, that would be a benefit. [Laughter] I love you, but that would still be a benefit. We don't know the plan of our lives, but God knows. Not only does he know, he has planned our lives. He has even set out good works that we should walk in them, having prepared them beforehand. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:10.

So we may reason from the fact that our Lord's life was beautifully planned to our own life, therefore the experiences of our lives, the illnesses, the tragedies, the problems, all of the other things are to be seen in the light of his plan for us. We shouldn't be disturbed over the things that happen to us. They are part of his plan for us. Now of course, if it is because we have been disobedient to

the word of God we should make our confession, but we should draw great comfort from the fact that he is a sovereign God who watches over our steps. John Nelson Darby said, “God’s ways are behind the scenes and he moves all the scenes that he is behind.” I’ve always liked that statement, it’s beautifully done.

Now some of them believed, we read, “And many of the people believed on him.” Now the basis of their faith was not great. They believed on him because of the signs that he had performed, but after all faith even of that character is better than unbelief.

You can see from this that what we are drawing up to is the necessity of the decision. What think ye of Christ? If you had been there when our Lord was speaking how would you have responded? What’s involved is the courage, the spiritual courage of a heroic choice.

I read a story; I think it was also one of the things that James Stewart said, of a Devon man in England who had known another young man who had gone out to sail with Sir Francis Drake. After many years they met again. One of the men had grown wealthy and influential in the community, but he had stayed home. The other had sailed with Drake for many years. The friend who had stayed home saw his old friend and said, “Well,” he said, “you haven’t made much out of all these years have you?” The other fellow said, “No, I’ve not made much. I’ve been cold, I’ve been hungry, I’ve been shipwrecked, I’ve been desperately frightened often, but I’ve been with the greatest captain who’s ever sailed the seas.” Now when you identify with the Lord Jesus Christ you may discover your life will change, and you may not be happy with some of the changes that occur, so far as the physical side of things are concerned. But one thing you can be sure of; that you will be sailing this life with the greatest captain that it is possible for anyone to have. And we encourage you to come to him.

One of the men that I used to listen to many years ago quite a bit was H. A. Ironside. Dr. Ironside used to come to Dallas every year, and I would usually hear him at least fourteen times, because he would speak that many times. And occasionally, during the week he would go over and speak sometimes at the old Believers Chapel, about thirty years ago. And he told a story once about

an experience that he had with Henry Varley. Henry Varley was a well-known evangelist of a couple of generations ago. And when Dr. Ironside was a relatively young man he was with Mr. Varley in San Francisco for one of his series of meetings in a church there, it was a large church. And Mr. Varley said to him, “Ironside, come down stairs with me after the meeting because they’re going to examine four people for membership in the church and I’d like to get an insight into how this church is operating, something about the tenor and mood and disposition of it. It’ll help in the meetings that I’m going to have.” So Ironside accompanied him down.

Four men were seeking to join the church. When the men gathered with the pastor the first man stood to his feet and said something like this, Dr. Ironside said, “My friends you all know me. My father and mother have been members of this church for years. I’ve often felt I should join the church, and so I made up my mind that if you would accept me I’d like to feel that I’m a member of the church of my parents.” He said a gentlemen spoke up in the audience and said, “May I ask the young man a question?” The minister said, “Well if it’s a proper one you may.” He said, “I would like to ask if the young man has been born again.” The minister jumped to his feet, Ironside said, and said, “I object. I don’t want our brother to attempt to answer that question. That’s down right impertinence. That matter is entirely between the individual and his God.” And they voted him in. Ironside said afterwards he reflected upon the text of Scripture that said, “As many has received him to them gave ye power to become the children of God even to them that believe on his name who were born not of bloods.” And that came home to him, “born not of bloods.” The next person stood up. He said, “Well friends you know me. I haven’t always been what I ought to be, but last New Year I made up my mind to turn over a new leaf and try to do better. I think it would help me to join the church and so I’ve applied for membership.” H. A. Ironside said, “They voted him in and no one asked any questions because the preceding question had not been answered.” And Ironside said, “I remembered the next phrase of John 1:13, ‘not of the will of the flesh.’” He said the third person arose and said, “You know my friends, I haven’t been in the habit of attending a church of this nomenclature.” He spoke with a British accent, “Over in England I attended the state church.

When I was a little child I was baptized by the archbishop of Canterbury. But since coming to America I’ve enjoyed coming down here and thought I’d like to join with you.”

So they voted him in, and H. A. Ironside said, “I remember the next clause which was, ‘nor of the will of man.’” Says, “That was three of them. One of them was a member of the church because his parents had been a member of the church, the second because he had turned over a new leaf and the third because he’d been baptized by a great church dignitary. There was one other fellow sitting there.” H. A. Ironside said he looked at him and he looked like he had the marks of sin over him. Ironside used to be a missionary with the Salvation Army. And this man told a different story. He said, “I don’t need to say very much. You know my story. My wife and my children have been members with you for a number of years. You know what a life I’ve led; I’ve been a drunkard, poor sinner. I alienated my wife and children so that they had to leave me. I was going down, down, down in my sins and it seems that there was no power to stop me. About six months ago I made up my mind that there was no help for me and I started down Market Street toward the water to throw myself overboard and commit suicide. When I got to Seventh and Market Street, there was a Salvation Army meeting going on, on the corner. I went over, they were singing the Cleansing Power of The Blood of Christ; Oh precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow, no other fountain I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.” He said, “They sang that over and over again.” And he said, “You know they sang it right into my heart. And I said to myself, ‘I wonder if it’s true. I wonder if it’s really true that there is hope for a sinner like me.’ And then several of the people began to stand up and give their testimony. And they spoke about how God had saved them. How they had been in the depths of sin and that God had done something for them, and I could see the change.

“And finally when the time came” he said, “I threw myself down on my knees by an old drum, and I said, ‘Oh God, if there’s hope for a sinner like me, save me tonight.’” And he said, “Something happened. I did come to Christ. I was saved. And that’s why I’d like to join the church.” And Dr. Ironside said, “I thought of ‘but of God.’” What a difference when a person is

born of God. Not because you’ve been baptized by a church dignitary, not because you’ve turned over a new leaf, not because you may think that you’ve done some good works, or that your family or brothers or sisters, or father or mother were Christians, but born of God. H. A. Ironside said, “He was truly saved. They voted him in, but I don’t know why he wanted to join that old ice box there.” [Laughter]

Well I don’t know your condition this morning. I do know this; that Jesus Christ brings us to the place of decision. And I do know that if by the grace of God your mind is illuminated to respond to the Lord Jesus Christ and you commit yourself to him for time and for eternity, by the grace of God, you’ll find him the greatest captain that anyone could possibly have. Come to Christ. Cast aside your self-righteousness, your trust in the good works, the education, the culture, whatever it may be in which you trust, acknowledge yourself to be what the Scriptures say you are; a sinner, under divine condemnation. Come to Christ; receive the gift of eternal life. May God help you to come.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee that we are able to enter into the experiences of the Lord Jesus Christ and into the very disposition and tenor of those days in which he ministered. And we know that just as in his day he brought division, so today he brings division. O by Thy grace Lord, let us be among them who truly believe, casting aside any trust in our own righteousness, casting ourselves upon his righteousness accomplished by the blood that was shed...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]