



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"Psychology and the Sufficiency of Scripture"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of our study together tonight. We thank Thee for the fact that the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, that it piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and of the marrow and is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We thank Thee for all of the provision made for us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit who brings conviction and conversion with faith to those to whom Thou art ministering the truth. We thank Thee for all that has occurred in our lives. We desire Lord that others too may know the experience that we have had and the forgiveness of sins. We commit our time to Thee; we pray that it may be a fruitful and profitable time for all of us. And we ask it in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

[Message] I want to read two verses from 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16 and verse 17 as something of an introduction to our study tonight in "Psychology and the Sufficiency of Scripture." And the Apostle Paul in these familiar words writes, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, (or complete) thoroughly furnished (the Authorized Version says. We would say completely furnished) unto all good works."

The subject for tonight as we meet and study together, as I say, is "Psychology and the Sufficiency of Scripture." Perhaps it will help to begin with a simply clarification of two misunderstood words, psychiatry and psychology. I know that in my own experience these terms not being too familiar to me at one time tended to get confused in my own mind. Psychiatry is a branch of medicine, which specializes in the treatment of mental illness. Psychology is the theoretical investigation of human behavior and mental life. In one encyclopedia psychology has been described and defined in this way, as the "science or study of the activities of living things and their interaction with the environment. Psychologists study processes of sense perception, responses to stimuli, thinking, learning, remembering, and problem solving, emotions, and motivations, personality, mental disorders, and the interaction of the individual and the group."

Now, you can see that these are serious definitions. They are not like the comments that Lawrence Peter once made, "Psychiatry enables us to correct our faults by confessing our parents' shortcomings." [Laughter] That's not really part of our study. "Why should I tolerate a perfect stranger at the bedside of my mind?" Nabokov said. But we really are talking about some serious things, and psychology many Christian philosophers believe is basically religious. It has a surface resemblance to Christianity, not to doctrinal Christianity. I hate to say that because it is my conviction that genuine Christianity can only be doctrinal. There is no such thing as a Christianity that is not doctrinal, because that's the fundamental character of Christianity itself. It is doctrinal. But nevertheless I think we know what we mean. It's a popular way of expressing Christianity as being that that has to do with our daily life and the truths that affect our daily lives, but doctrinal Christianity is the study of theology, we might say.

But at any rate, many Christian philosophers believe that psychology is basically religious and that it does have a surface resemblance to Christianity. It promises wholeness. It promises fulfillment. It promises the ability to cope. And these are things that one thinks about when one thinks about Christianity if one does know anything about Christianity. We do know also that many well known psychologists have stated their views in religious terms. For example, one well known psychologist has defined religion as "any system of thought and action shared by a group which gives the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion." To place this in context, one could for example cite many who have given themselves to what we might call humanism, or secular humanism, more accurately, and find that the kinds of things that they are talking about are really essentially religious things.

John Dewey in one of his books concluded with an exhortation to make humanism an active, common faith. Those are his words, "common faith." In humanism "are all the elements of a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class, or race. Such a faith has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind. It remains to make it explicit and militant." What Christianity claims is that it will give the things that one needs as the apostle says that "he might be thoroughly furnished" or thoroughly or completely furnished unto all good works.

I would like to say one other thing before we begin. I am excluding several types of psychology because first of all I don't know much about them, and secondly they don't really bear on the points that I would like to emphasize tonight. I'd like to concentrate on what has been selfist psychology, a kind of popular psychology. Probably the average person who knows very little about psychology would think of this type of psychology when he thinks of psychology. But there are many branches of the study of psychology that I am not going to talk about.

Now, I'd like to begin by saying just a few words about the philosophical roots of the psychology of self theorists. There are two things, in my opinion, that stand out in

the psychology of the self-theorists. First of all is the fact of secular or scientific, as it is sometimes called, humanism. Now, let me say a few things about humanism. When I grew up and went to high school, I went to high school in South Carolina where there is, at that time particularly over fifty years ago, there was a great tradition of the study of the classics. And as I've mentioned several times to you who have been in Believers Chapel I started out taking Latin and I took eight years of Latin. That was not uncommon at all. And many of the ones with whom I grew up began with that kind of study. I also took classical Greek before I was converted, long before I was converted. When I was converted I could read the Greek New Testament immediately. And I look back on it, I count it as part of the providence of God in my training, because that's what I spent a great deal of my life doing and even still do it.

When I went to Amsterdam last month I taught in Tyndall Theological Seminary the exegesis of the Greek text of the Epistle to the Romans. So the kinds of things that I studied would be called humanism. Humanism, in my mind, goes back to the rebirth of learning that took place in the days of the Renaissance. In England they call it the Renaissance, but in my part of the country they called it the Renaissance. And I know that the interest that was reborn in the Europeans and others to study the ancient documents including the Scriptures, incidentally, led to many feel very directly to the Protestant Reformation. So when we talk about humanism we should realize that we are talking about something that has been of itself of great value to us. There are many notable features then of philosophical and literary humanism.

But secular humanisms' presuppositions are quite a bit different from Christianity's presuppositions. Secular humanism's presuppositions are grounded in man and in his capabilities, grounded in autonomous reason, that is that we can by our reason come to understand the nature of things. We can understand man; we can understand our world; we can understand the life that we each have so that autonomous reason is characteristic of secular humanism; confidence in man due to recent studies as the pentacle of

evolutionary development. And thus by its very nature secular humanism is hostile to Christianity. Because the very fundamental facts of Christianity are that we do not arrive at truth by human reason, we arrive at truth by divine revelation. In other words, God has given us the knowledge of the truth, which we could not come to of ourselves. To put it in the language of the word of God, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. They're foolishness to him. Neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned." So a true humanist of the secular type, that is not a Christianity humanist must ultimately realize that the doctrines that he is interested in and propounds are doctrines that are hostile to Christianity.

Eric Fromm, who has written some psychology books, was a well known psychologist. In his book *The Dogma of Christ* argues the belief in God always functions as the ally of rulers. "A position he must find difficult to reconcile," someone has said, "with the persecution of Christian believers by atheistic rulers in say the Soviet Union, Albania, or China." Exactly how extreme the convictions of the selfists are about the total intrinsic goodness of man is that they are quite extremely antagonistic to Christianity. The popularizers whose books number in sales millions that you will read in your bookstores, and you have no doubt picked them up; perhaps you've bought a number of them. They almost unanimously assume the goodness of the self. They rarely even discuss the problems of self-expression which lead to exploitation or narcissism or sadism. But it is assumed that human nature is generally good. So that, it seems to me, is one of the fundamental presuppositions of the philosophy of the selfists or the self-theorists. And it's important when we think about the things that they say to us to remember that fact.

The second thing that I would call a significant root of the psychology of the self-theorists and one of their more fundamental presuppositions is determinism. That is the universe is a closed system governed by the laws of cause and effect and by the random associations of chance so that what we see in the universe about us is a closed system, a system in which there is no super human being, no supernatural being such as the

Christian triune God who is in control of the affairs of this earth. Everything operates according to those laws. Human beings also are closed systems. Voluntary choice is an illusory thing. You may think you have that, but you don't really have voluntary choice, for it's ultimately within that system. We may think, I say, we make choices constantly, but we fool ourselves. Spontaneity does not really exist. One Christian psychologist has said, "Those of us who practice psychotherapy tend to close our minds to the implications of this. Our patients may be closed systems reacting to our therapeutic strategies with the same balancing mechanisms that govern the lives of simple cells while we in our wisdom supervise the process administering stimuli from time to time. But we fool ourselves for we are the same as our clients and are doubly fools failing to see you can't think logically in a closed system." And then this psychologist goes on to quote Haldane and C.S. Lewis. Haldane, he said, said, "If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true. And hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms." So one can see that if this philosophy is the philosophy that governs our thinking, then we are starting out with something that is thoroughly antithetical to biblical Christianity.

Now secondly, the goals and grounds of the self-theorists. And first of all, the goals of the self-theorists or the goals of selfist psychology. The background of the kind of psychology that I'm speaking about is generally traced to Ludwig Feuerbach who lived in the 19th century. He wrote a book called *The Essence of Christianity* and in it there was anything but the essence of Christianity. Feuerbach was greatly influential in the life of Harry Emerson Fosdick. When I first became a Christian in 1941 believing Christians that I came in contact with, people like you, they all, they were much older than I was, but they all knew about Harry Emerson Fosdick. If you wanted the paragon of the heretics of that day it was Harry Emerson Fosdick, and he was constantly on the Christian pages, that is of evangelical literature, because he was the one who was denying the Christian faith. He was very much influenced by Ludwig Feuerbach, and Fosdick's books

represented the same kind of selfist psychology except that it was in its earlier stage, stages that one finds today.

And then after Fosdick came Norman Vincent Peale, and again, when I advanced a little bit in the Christian into the fifties, Norman Vincent Peale became the paragon of individuals who were strongly influenced by the philosophy of Feuerbach and the power of positive thinking. His book that was published in 1952 was of tremendous influence. In fact you can see it even today. I saw it today. I received from the Cowboys the glossy publication of what this season is going to be. And I read three or four of the articles in it. And I'm going home tonight and I'll probably pick it up and read a couple more. There are probably twenty articles in it, and the one that I read was lengthy. It was a very nice article and so I'm going to read it. But when I came to Michael Irvin and the article on him it was entitled "The Power of Positive Thinking." In other words, Norman Vincent Peale and Harry Emerson Fosdick, and Ludwig Feuerbach still live in the Dallas Cowboys. And if it has reached down to that level in our society, then you can be sure it has permeated our society. When it reaches the society of the you know's then [Laughter] it has really reached the common man.

Now, the goals of selfist psychology. The goals of selfist psychology embrace such goals as these, personality integration; this is really their kind of doctrine of salvation, personality integration. Fulfillment on one's creative potential, the building of self esteem, now that sounds great doesn't it? And there are some good things about it. Personality integration, fulfillment of creative potential, building of self esteem; why to fulfill one's creative potential or to develop one's creative potential has been the standard goal of educator's as well as of psychology for man years. What's meant by creativity is that the adult of child expresses potential. And that's assumed to intrinsically good. You don't have anyone saying, "Develop your potential, but be careful that it's not bad. In that case don't develop it." It's always good. Your potential is always good. Now, the facts of human nature, I think, are the other. Not only does the Scripture tell us that men are

sinners, but the facts of human life tell us that many people have the potential for terrible evil as a result of the fact that they have been born in sin. They are sons of Adam. They are descendants of him; so creative potential is always assumed to be good rather than possibly bad. As a matter of fact we know it's always bad if there is no contact with salvation through Jesus Christ.

Now, they do not mean generally accomplishing anything of genuine creative significance. This worship of creativity seems to be an outgrowth of the romanticism of the 19th century. What was worshipped then is what someone has called "the rare God categorizable as the genius." For the Christian, however, all creativity has its origin in God. To claim that the individual human being is really creative is either silly or blasphemous. Creation belongs to God.

Now, I have lots of friends that use the term creative all the time, and I grant you, it has come to mean something far less than what it really should mean. It means something like original now. But nevertheless to use the term creative is to usurp something that belongs to God. Only God is creative or perhaps the individual in whom God has worked in a most significant way we might conceive be able to do something, but it would be God working, the creating God, through that individual. But that's far from the thought of the self-theorists. A person can express his individual in creative fashion, original fashion only by aligning himself with God's will. Someone has said, "Real creativity requires a soul cooperating with God, a soul that becomes God's loving agent in all its activity however mundane." The creative act is viewed as a gift from God in its greatest sense. So the idea I can, of myself, bring forth within me my creative potential is itself contrary to the teaching of the word of God."

Today, in the secular world, creativity is simply the gift from the self to the self. In other words, it's entirely something within the individual. It's not something that comes from God according to their philosophy and theology. Sometimes its degenerated into a synonym for any form of personal pleasure without reference to others. The term creative

can be used of almost anything now. You might find Nolan Ryan pitched last night with creative skill. Or Bo Jackson was swinging the bat with creative ability. Well, it was unusual ability. Not many people could swing a bat quite like that, but so far as being creative in the truest sense, it's not true.

Another thing that I'd like to say just a word about is the grounds of selfist psychology. Man's reason, natural potentialities empower him to know good and to act accordingly. And so wedding some existential philosophy to psychology it is often pointed out or claimed that we can actually by choosing and by process of choosing and a series of choices become what we hope to become, and thus reach what is called self actualization. It would be secular, but self actualization. And that is done by acting according to our natural potentialities and thus reaching what might be called that. One might ask, well who are some of these secular saints that perhaps we ought to follow? Well one psychologist, Abraham Maslow, has said that some of those secular saints are Lincoln in his last days. Well, we southerners will let that pass, we like Lincoln now. Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson a man who despised the teaching of the New Testament, a man who said that the Apostle Paul confused the simple teaching of Jesus and changed it into the mystifications of a professional theologian; Thomas Jefferson a saint? I hadn't thought of him in that way. I don't think I ever will. Einstein, he's one of the secular saints. Eleanor Roosevelt. [Laughter] Stop your laughing. [Laughter] Jane Adams, certainly more saintly. William James; Spinoza, a Jewish man, Jewish philosophers; Gerta. Well if these are the secular saints, I don't want to be in their company when this little scene on earth comes to its end and we have to face the triune God.

Well now, let me turn for the rest of our time to what I would call the failures of self theorists in the light of Scripture. In the first place this is kind of an introduction, because I want to talk about their problem with sin, their problem with self esteem and their problem with suffering. Let me say this in the beginning, it is, I think, really

impossible to integrate true Christianity and selfist psychology. When I was on the faculty of Trinity Theological Divinity School in Chicago they have a fine man who is one of the professors of psychology at that good institution. And he's written a number of books, and he's very much supportive of Christian psychology, naturally that's his subject, that's what he's taught. That's what he teaches around the country. But even he has said in one of his most recent books that it really is impossible to integrate psychology and Christianity. There are many things that one might find integratable, but as two disciplines they cannot be integrated. They are just impossibly different.

Selfism is a horizontal heresy, not a vertical heresy. It's an ethical system, and it's an ethical system grounded in these principles and presuppositions that I have mentioned. Someone has called it "an ethical system without the first commandment." The first commandment, of course, that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our souls." This is an ethical system without that. Many of you recognize, of course, that Judaism, although Judaism would not claim that. In fact, Judaism would be very much upset if they were put in a category of an ethical system without the first commandment. But nevertheless it is an ethical system. Psychology is, I think, can be called, that is this kind of psychology that we are talking about, an ethical system without the first commandment, a horizontal heresy.

There are three great problems, I think, that mark the failure of the self theorists in the light of Scripture, and first of all their problem with sin. You know, of course, that if you think about Christianity and I know most of you in this audience if not all of you are professing Christians and probably genuine Christians. But you know if we do not have a doctrine of sin, if we do not recognize the fact of sin, then you know that Christianity makes no sense whatsoever. Christianity is a means as a system of truth, is a divine revelation by which sin may be dealt with, dealt with by the Lord God. So if we say there is no such thing as sin, Christianity doesn't make any sense. Now, you can, of course, talk about ethical things, and you can give them Christian words and Christian phrases.

But so far as the essence of Christianity is concerned, if you do not recognize the fact of sin and guilt and the possibility of eternal guilt, then don't talk about biblical Christianity, because there is no sense in Christianity if there is no sin.

What would be the point of the incarnation? Well, perhaps you might say, well God would at least give us some indication of what he was like, but it would be insufficient to save anyone. It would be insufficient for the forgiveness for my sins for me to know something like that, that God was here in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, would make my guilt only that much greater. What about the cross, what's the point of his cross, his death? What's the point of his resurrection? Why all of this if there is no such thing as sin, and if the sin is not the sin that condemns to eternal judgment and separation from God. Sin introduces responsibility to God. That's why in this kind of psychology I am talking about responsibility is small and no responsibility is directed to God generally. I'm not talking about the Christian psychologists who may be trying to integrate psychology with some of the things of the word of God. But sin is the means by which responsibility is introduced. Sin, repentance, and forgiveness imply freedom and responsibility not genetic disorders. If we were to say, for example, that a person is not a sinner but he's afflicted with a sickness. Then we are in effect saying that he is afflicted with a genetic disorder.

William Kirk Kilpatrick has some interesting things to say about this. I'm going to read what he has to say. He says, "In the first place the parallel between sin and sickness is not a good one. Sin is often seen as an exciting and pleasurable possibility, sickness is not. Men do not pursue arthritis the way they do adultery. [Laughter] In the second place it's a poor compliment to the species. It robs us of the real dignity we have which is the freedom of choosing the good. And you can see if we say that alcoholism, for example, is a sickness and then we find a person who is delivered from it, we've taken from him the dignity of the choices that made him a being of much greater moral stature. He goes on to say, "The reverse side of the coin stamped 'Smith's sin is only a sickness' is

'Smith's virtue is vitamin based.' It's a way of reducing the human being to the level of a walking chemistry shop. Often it's the disposition to be generous and kind; it makes us excuse other people's faults or sicknesses." You know, we tend to do that, we like to use these euphemisms. It sounds more euphemistic to say, "Well he has the sickness of alcoholism or the sickness of this, when Scripture says it's plainly a sin." But we call it a sickness. That's euphemistic. And I don't deny that some people do it because they don't want to hurt the individual. They feel that by doing that they're not really hurting them. But you're really hurting them. Is that the way we would like others to think of our own misdeed? Do we want to be patted on the head like children while some grown up makes excuses for us? Poor Billy he can't help himself. Or worse, poor Billy he was born with an endorphin deficiency. Now, what are we really saying?

Incidentally, if I may diverge a bit for a moment, the things that have happened at Carter High School are very interesting in the light of this. Have you noticed how many people have come forward and said, "We're responsible. We're responsible for our actions." And who should be coming forward. Well, I think there's one mother who said, "It's nobody else's fault by their fault." Bravo probably goes to a good Christian church. But the rest, the educational establishment all trained in this kind of psychology, what are they doing? Blaming the poor coach. I didn't know a coach of a football team was responsible for all of the life of everyone who attended the school. I didn't know a football coach was supposed to keep his men constantly out of everything. I thought he was supposed to teach them football and supervise their play on the football field, and when that was over he was relatively free. They were responsible to their family, to their mothers, to their fathers. And if you're going to look for some responsibility it seems to me the ones to whom you should look are those who are in the educational establishment who have those students constantly with them, who should be teaching them at least what Christianity is as well as what selfist psychology is. So it's obvious if we don't understand what sin is there is no use for us to talk about Christianity and this

kind of psychology does not recognize the awful consequences of sin against a holy, triune God in heaven.

There's another problem, and that's the problem of self esteem. There are some positives, incidentally, in the term self esteem. After all, when you think about the things that you want to think about for yourself, there are some positive things that we ought to have in mind. After all we should think well of ourselves in this sense, that we are God's creation, we are created in the image of God. That's something to be happy about. Then also we should feel, as Christians, that we are useful in that which God is doing. Be is has been pleased upon occasions to use us for his glory. That's a legitimate reason why we should look within and thank the Lord, but thank the Lord for what he has done with us and through us. Not have esteem of ourselves simply for ourselves, but because we're God's creation, because we're here to represent God. We are here and perhaps have been used by him.

I have a friend who is a very good preacher. I think he's been in years past affected a little by selfist theology. He likes to take off every now and then against worm theology. And what he means is the Psalmist remember said, "I am a worm, and no man." And that seems to give a very low evaluation of a human being. And so he takes off against worm theology, we ought not to hold worm theology. Well, of course, if you're going to be just completely occupied with the fact that you are the spiritual equivalent of a worm and that's all you're thinking about, well I can understand something of that. But there are other terms in the Bible too. Dust and ashes, too, the dust and ashes theology. Well, there are many different metaphors that we might think of that we might erect as theology, but strictly speaking if you're going to have to have a choice between worm theology and the kind of theology that does not recognize the horrible nature of the human state before God, I'll take the worm theology.

Now, I say that there are things that we can say for self esteem, but there are many negative things too. For example, when we talk about self esteem we are talking

about a kind of non-Christian rationale, that is I look within and I try to build up my self esteem, my image of myself, by things, well, which are mainly wishful thinking. You might say it's healthful for me to look within and to find things within myself that I can be happy with. But the question is not is something healthful for me, the question is, is it true. And essentially if we tend to make our self the thing that we really are most concerned with, and that determines how happy or unhappy we are, if our self is really what we are occupied with, that's essentially, it seems to me, and idolatry; and idolatry with the self taking the place of God. If I say I am marvelous because I have told myself I am marvelous, then I do not see how that can really answer the question, is it true, because once I start doing things like that, after all the logic of the premise forces the conclusion. Once you elect to believe that you're the pick of the crop, I can't help but think of Jerry Jones talking about the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders and saying they were the pick of the litter. [Laughter] But if you have elected yourself to be the pick of the crop, or the pick of the litter for that matter, you actually believe that you are that, then you're already involved in a fiction. And the initial fiction has to be covered by another and another, so finally you of course will discover that will not do.

There are some interesting objections to the self image argument, and I'm going to read a few of them for you. I think I've got time to do this. These are some objections that are given by Christian psychologists. "Suppose it is true that the depressed lacks a good self image, where is that good image to come from now? From inside, but the person is sunk in despair. From us? But we can't replace the lost job or the lost lover, telling him he needs a good image of himself is like telling a man with eye problems that he needs better vision. It's not very helpful." It's like Martha telling me I need some help for my lack of hearing. And I counter with; as soon as you get help for your memory [Laughter] I will buy a hearing aide. I don't know that I've won that argument, but at least when I first used it, it did kind of stop her a moment or two. [Laughter] But I know I have to stand the consequences of that later on. [Laughter]

He says, "A related problem is that psychologists have contradictory things to say about the origin of self image. On the one hand child psychologists suggest that self image is our parents' responsibility. If they were good parents and loved us, then we'll have good self concepts. If they were bad parents, then we'll have bad self concepts. This really amounts to saying it's a matter of luck. Good self image is good luck, and bad self image is bad luck." Now, you remember, of course, we are talking about it from a non-Christian selfist psychology view point. "On the other hand adult psychologists seem to say we can change our luck any time we wish. We can rise above fate and circumstances and somehow establish our self image independent of the vagaries of fortune. But just how does one do that? Implicit in the self image argument is the notion that people with a good self image don't suffer from serious depression. No they don't, as long as life is going well for them; just as a thief is an honest man when he's not stealing. Again, it's a question of which comes first, our good luck, or our good self image. Take away the good luck and the self image begins to crumble. Very few people stand up well in the face of sudden and serious illness, the loss of a job, or the end of a marriage or love affair. Do we then say to them that their self concept must not have been very good to start with? The self image further suggests that autonomous self validating people don't suffer from depression. No they don't, not if they have made themselves so uncaring that the loss of another leaves them unaffected. Psychopaths don't suffer from depression. In the long run the answer to the proponents of autonomy is a question. What are you asking us to do? Should we so armor ourselves with self sufficiency that we become invulnerable, not only to being hurt, but to ever getting close enough to be hurt."

"And finally the philosophy of self esteem is everywhere. One would think that by now it would have time to take effect. Yet depression is rampant, so is suicide. Adolescent suicide is up almost three hundred percent over the last twenty-five years." He's writing in the 1980's. "Suicide among children, at one time a rare phenomenon, is on the rise. The philosophy of self esteem doesn't cause these problems, but it doesn't

seem to prevent them either. I arm you with the sword of self esteem says the psychological society to its children. It will serve you well in battle, but it's not a good weapon and our enemies are not easily slain. The power of the opposition has been sadly underestimated and our own powers greatly exaggerated."

In the Old Testament one of the greatest of the characters, as you know, was Job. And the story of Job reaches its climax in chapter 42, the last chapter. And all of you, I know, who have read Job, you have rejoiced in the last verses, the first verses of the chapter, but these last verses of this section where Job answers the Lord and says, "I know that Thou canst do everything and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he who hideth counsel without knowledge. Therefore have I uttered that I understood not things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Here I beseech Thee, and I will speak, I will demand of Thee and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." That's the climax, that's what Job has learned. He's learned dust and ashes theology in its truest sense. He's learned what he really is in the sight of God, and that's not much, except in so far as we come to be united to him and then that's an awful lot. For in Christ is to have the blessings of eternal life and of a position before God with which he's pleased, but outside of Christ as of ourselves, dust and ashes is what we are and we will ultimately be that, too.

Would you say that Job had lost his self esteem? Well if he had the selfist psychologists self esteem he would have lost it. The Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 16 after the great confession, you'll remember Peter began to rebuke him. He said to Peter, "Get behind me Satan. Thou art an offense unto me for Thou savorest not the things that be of God but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." That is the precise opposite of the philosophy of self esteem. We give up our lives that we might

win it in Christ. Was our Lord wrong? No, of course not, he wasn't wrong. Others are wrong, men are wrong, our Lord is never wrong. The way to happiness, the way to life, the way to fulfillment, the way to a true self-image is to give up our lives, as Christians to give up our lives and gain his life. And if we don't even have his life, the way to come to the possession of that life is to acknowledge our lost condition, our sin, our guilt, and before the Lord God express our need to him and receive the free gift of the eternal life that he offers by the bloodshed on Calvary's cross, the incarnation, the death, the burial, the resurrection.

There's one final problem I can, I think, deal with in just a moment. "The test of a theory is not simply its ability to relieve pain but what it says about pain it can relieve," someone has said. To deny meaning in pain is to increase pain. In Christianity suffering has meaning, in selfist psychology it does not. You won't find selfist theorists talking about suffering and the purposes of suffering. You just won't find it. That's why when Delta plane is destroyed in the accident at VFW, the questions that the average man propounds if he propounds any questions are, why did this happen? What's the point of this? Of course, I couldn't stand up and tell him precisely what the point is, but a Christian would know that it stood within certain possibilities from the word of God. And many of the things that happen to us are things that could be called pains, deep pains. But a Father in heaven has purpose in those deep pains. That Christianity supplies, selfist psychology has no help for suffering. You won't find them talking about it. You won't find a philosophy of suffering among the self theorists, they don't have it. In fact, you rarely will find any laughter among them. Did you ever notice that about paranoid people? They never laugh or hardly ever laugh. They're so occupied with themselves. There's no room for laughter. They don't have to laugh. When a person's laughing you can be sure that maybe there is good hope for that person.

Suffering for the Christian in Christianity is administered by a loving father for various good purposes because all suffering of Christians is, I'm going to use a broad

term, is redemptive in the sense that it is purposeful. The Apostle Paul talks about his suffering in Colossians chapter 1. You maybe remember in verse 24, I believe it is, the apostle writes, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you." Look at the apostle rejoicing in the things that he suffered for the Colossians. "I am rejoicing in my sufferings for you and feel up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." The apostle rejoiced in the things that he was suffering, because they had a purpose. They were related to our Lord. They were related to the ministry of the gospel of Christ, and he could rejoice in them though they were painful things for him and ultimately led to his physical death.

Peter talks about the same thing in the first chapter of 1 Peter. The Apostle John said in the Book of Revelation he was in the aisle of Patmos as an exile suffering on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I'll tell you my Christian friends; it's great to be a Christian. It's great to have a trust in the things that are found in the word of God. I'm not interested in any kind of psychology that leaves out the great truths of Christianity. I'm sure that we can learn some things, particularly from the Christian psychologists, but when it comes to life itself I would stake my life, my happiness, my joy, my future upon the truth of divine revelation which we have in the Bible. Time fails me to explain the ways in which modern psychology has effectively denied the word of God by its theories such as environmental determinism and homosexuality. I intended to do that, but I just didn't have time to do it this time. But later on I'd like to some time, at least, point out that the environmental determinism is one of the reasons why we have the problem of homosexuality with us today.

Noah Weeks concludes his discussion with "The whole point of that argument is that the one who created has the best understanding of creation." And how true that is. Let me conclude again by reading our text in 2 Timothy chapter 3, and verse 16 and 17. And let me encourage you, the Scripture is sufficient for us. The truths of the word of God are sufficient for us. If you think you have found the Scripture insufficient it is

because you have not learned the Scriptures sufficiently well. And the proper step is to give yourself to the word of God, and you will find, I'm sure, that the word of God and the things that are revealed in it will be sufficient for you. That's what the apostles claim, that's what the Scriptures claim. That's what our Lord claims. So the apostle writes, and we conclude with this, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, completely furnished unto every good work." May God help us to fulfill that in measure at least. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, how grateful we are for the sufficiency of our Lord, his saving sacrifice, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, a loving Father in heaven, and the word of God, the Scriptures, to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path as we move through our day, the day in which Thou hast placed us. Oh God, help us in our lives, in our testimonies, to properly...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]