



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

2 Corinthians 5:21

"The Man Christ Jesus: The Sinlessness"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] We thank Thee Lord for the privilege of the study of Thy word and again we ask that Thou will give us direction and guidance as we study the Scriptures together. We pray that the things that we learn will be helpful to us in our spiritual life and Lord we ask that our appreciation for Jesus Christ may grow as we learn more about him, his person, and his work. This hour we commit to Thee in the name of Christ our Savior. Amen.

[Message] The subject for tonight is "The Man Christ Jesus: The Sinlessness." In our last study in the doctrine of Christ we sought to show that the human nature of our Lord was assumed into union with the person of Christ or the logos. Incidentally, the term logos is a term for the person of Christ. And so, having been assumed into union with the logos, it was miraculously sanctified so as to be sinless and perfect. He was really and truly the son of Mary, but at the same time he was also the sinless Son of God. That holy thing, the angel said to Mary, would be a description of our Lord Jesus Christ. The result of the incarnation, the conception and the incarnation, was that the Lord Jesus was bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh, of her substance. She was the mother of his human soul as well as of his human body. And we also spoke about how there was a

union of the two natures in our Lord that proceeded from the time of the embryo on through into the time of his manhood.

The doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus Christ is affirmed by the fathers as well as the symbols, or the great creeds. For example, Augustine has said concerning the man Christ, that he was free from the possibility of sinning, so that Augustine not only taught that the Lord Jesus was sinless, but also impeccable. That is, that he could not sin. Now, we must not confuse these doctrines of the sinlessness of Christ and the impeccability of Christ. That is a topic that will come up when we deal with the question of the hypostatic union. Augustine said that he was free from the possibility of sinning, and so it is evident that he believed in the sinlessness of Christ. The expression of the Chalcedon conference was that he was like us in all respects, yet apart from sin. So at Chalcedon in the great statement concerning the person of Christ, we have an affirmation of the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus.

The Westminster Confession in its larger catechism has this to say concerning the Lord Jesus. "The Son of God became man by being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin." So it is clear that in the Westminster Confession the sinlessness of our Lord is taught. Now, I don't think we have to debate that part of the matter, because most of us know that has been the orthodox doctrine of the Christian church down through the centuries. Let's turn now for a quick review of the biblical texts that review the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus before we deal with some of the problems that have been raised concerning this doctrine. And first of all, let's turn to the passage in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, and verse 21, 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21. This is a passage that is familiar, I know, with most of you in this room. We read, 2 Corinthians 5:21, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." This is one of the many texts that affirms the sinlessness of our Lord. In fact, there are so many of these texts that it's difficult to know which ones to use in a brief survey.

But notice the expression in verse 21, "He made Him who knew no sin." Now, that expression is interesting, because the verb for "know" that is used here is a verb that stresses personal experience. And so the expression "Who knew no sin," stresses the fact that the Lord Jesus had no personal participation, no experience of sin. Incidentally, in some of the rabbinic literature, this word is used of a one-year-old child that has not tasted sin. So, the statement, "Who knew no sin," is an expression of the fact that the Lord Jesus had never experienced sin. And the fact that the tense in which it is found in the Greek text also suggests that it is a kind of evaluation of his whole life. So that we have here a kind of summary statement of the Lord Jesus, "He knew no sin."

Let's turn second to the passage in 1 Peter chapter 2, 1 Peter chapter 2, in verse 22. Now, Peter writes, and he wrote out of a great deal of experience with our Lord having been with him constantly for three years. And even though he has had this personal experience with the Lord we read in verse 22, "Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth." And again, the tense of this word for "committed" is a tense that suggests that the statement is a statement that surveys his whole life. So he committed no sin, not once did he sin. The citation, incidentally, is from Isaiah chapter 53 and verse 9, and affirms then that he is the suffering servant of Jehovah, and the suffering servant of Jehovah is a person who did not commit any sin.

Let's turn on now for another word from one of the other apostles, John, in his first epistle, chapter 3, in verse 5, 1 John chapter 3, and verse 5. Here the apostle of love writes, "And you know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. The sinner is lawless, but Christ was manifested to take away sins." The man who sins then is a person who thwarts the whole purpose of God in the coming of the Son of God in the flesh. He himself is sinless. Sin does not exist in him. It is utterly impossible for us to think of sin being in our Lord, John would say.

Now, think of these three expressions from three apostles. "He knew no sin," "He did no sin," "In him there was no sin." Those are very strong statements, and taken

together, of course, make a very strong case for the sinlessness of our Lord. Now, let's turn back to 1 Peter chapter 3, in verse 18, 1 Peter chapter 3, in verse 18. Peter writes again, "For Christ also died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust in order that he might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit." Now, in this passage the Lord Jesus is called the just one, *dikaiois*. Now, that is a word that can only refer to a person who is sinless unless it is a reference to a person who is just by way of divine imputation. Now, it can be said of us that we are just, because we have been justified; the righteousness of God imputed to us by virtue of what Christ has done on the cross. But our Lord does not have any imputed righteousness. His righteousness is his own inherent righteousness, and so the word just here cannot be a reference to an imputation of justification or justice. It must therefore be a recognition of what he is inherently. And it says that he is the just who dies for the unjust, again, an expression of his sinlessness.

Well, let's turn now to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 7, verse 26, Hebrews chapter 7, verse 26. The writer of this epistle, the epistle of the high priesthood of the Lord Jesus has an interesting statement concerning the high priest in this 26th verse of the 7th chapter. We read, "For it is fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens." Notice the adjectives, holy, innocent, undefiled. Now, the first of these is not the usual word for holy. The Bible speaks of us as holy ones, translates it saints. And as you know, all Christians are saints. The verb, the word is the word *hagios*, but this is not the word *hagios*, this is the word *hosios* that is translated here. *Hagios*, incidentally, looks something like this or we can transliterate it as H-A-G-I-O-S. This other word is *hosios*, which may be transliterated something like H-O-S-I-O-S. Can you see that? [Laughter] All you need is just a pair of glasses to see that. Can you see it now? I'll let you look at it for a minute or two and then I'll put it back.

Now, the word that is ordinarily used for a Christian who is holy is the word hagios. It means "one who is set apart." But this word that is used here in Hebrews chapter 7, in verse 26 is not a word of position. It rather is a word that means something like "devout, pious, pure." Now, these other adjectives that are used here are adjectives that refer to his guilelessness and his purity. Holy, innocent, undefiled, so the combination of these words expresses the sinlessness of our Lord Jesus Christ. What the priests of the Old Testament were typically and ceremonially and legally, he was internally and morally. In other words, he is the high priest who is able by virtue of his own inherent worth to offer the sacrifice that is sufficient for the sins of the people of God, so that he in himself is the antitype of all of those priests of the Old Testament whose holiness was outward, connected with the services in the tabernacle and with the garments that they wore when they carried out the priestly services. He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and higher than the heavens.

Let's turn now to John chapter 6, verse 69, John chapter 6, and verse 69. Here we read, "And we have believed, and have come to know that you are the holy one of God." Now, the word that is used here is the word hagios. While hosios refers to character, inherent character, hagios refers to destination, set apart for a purpose. So that the word Hosios, which was used in Hebrews chapter 7 is one that was used of persons predominantly, and the latter is used of both persons and things. Now, when this term is used of the Lord, he is the holy one of God, it marks him out as absolutely devoted to God, one who has given over to his purposes and his goals completely. So it expresses the fact that he is, in himself, the person who is completely devoted to the Lord, the holy one of God. Others saw this, incidentally, in him so that we find this an affirmation of what others saw in him.

If you turn over to Luke chapter 4, in verse 34, you will see that it is not only the apostles who understood our Lord's unusual status and character, but even the enemies of God recognized him as such. In verse 34 of Luke chapter 4 we read, "Ha, what do we

have to do with you, so the demons say, Jesus of Nazareth, have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the holy one of God." And so here we have an instance of an individual who is possessed of the spirit of an unclean demon who acknowledges the holiness of the Lord Jesus.

Now, the final text is John chapter 8, and verse 46, John chapter 8, and verse 46. And this certainly is an interesting one, too. John chapter 8, verse 46, the Lord Jesus is speaking, and he challenges the men around him by saying, "Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe me?" Leon Morris has written a very good commentary on the Gospel of John, and he has said concerning this text that the first part of the verse is a staggering assertion of sinlessness. And they do not take it up. We are often so interested in the fact that they found no charge to lay that we overlook the other fact that the really striking thing is the making of the challenge. And so, here our Lord challenges them and says, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" This challenge could only be made by a wild madman, a monstrous hypocrite, or an infinitely pure man. Who would dare challenge others, especially those who knew him, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" It's impossible to think of any other figure of history making a claim such as this. I don't know of anyone who is able to get away with anything like this.

There is a famous old story of Bronson Alcott, the New England dreamer, who went to England and had a conversation with Carlyle, in which he said to Mr. Carlyle that he felt that he was just as much one with the Father as Jesus. But Carlyle said, "Well, that may be so, but Jesus got men to believe him." And that's the big difference between our Lord and others.

It is striking, when you think about our Lord, that he appears in two ways different from all other men. In the first place, he is a person who searchingly told others of the evil within their hearts, and yet he made no confession of evil himself. Isn't that a strange thing? He, who was so morally sensitive that he has become the supreme conscious of mankind, challenges men to convict him of sin. Now, all this reveals a

sinlessness in which he is not only separate from sinners but distinct from the saints. It's interesting when you read the letters or the writings of the saints, such as Augustine's *Confessions* or Thomas, some of the writings of, I mentioned Augustine's *Confessions* or of the *Imitation of Christ* Thomas a Kempis work or works like this. Almost all of the saints, when they describe their holiness, describe it as a tremendous struggle. And in the part of the struggle, there is a great deal given over to the confession of sin, the acknowledgement of evil, of the necessity for the growth in grace, of the fallings into sin, of all of the things that characterize them as they made their way from a lack of holiness to a saintly life. But in the Lord Jesus Christ there is no indication of any struggle, such as they had, whatsoever.

Now, it's true in the Garden of Gethsemane, he did struggle, but it was not a struggle with his sin. It was a struggle with the will of God. There is no evidence that our Lord ever had any struggle with any kind of sin within him. So that's one sense in which our Lord Jesus is entirely different from others. But not only did he never betray any sense of any moral imperfection or moral need, but on the positive side, he regarded himself as the one who was to suffice for the needs of others. Someone has put it this way, "Other men are lost sheep. He's not only not lost, but is the shepherd. Others are sick, he's not only in health but is the physician. Other lives are forfeited. He is not only his own, but is the ransom price for others. Others, all others, are sinner; he not only is not a sinner, but is the Savior." "Which of you convinces me of sin?" It is a tremendous affirmation of the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus.

One of the striking things, too, about the New Testament testimony is the fact that some of the men who confessed his sinlessness were the ones who had probably the least reason to do so. Take a man like Pontius Pilate. He didn't have to confess the moral worth of the Lord Jesus. It only made his status before God that much worse, but three times in the trial of our Lord he says, "I don't find any fault in him." He confesses the moral worth of the Lord Jesus, while at the same time, like the coward that he was, he

allows him to be given into the hands of the Hebrews. There has been no man like our Lord Jesus Christ. We are inclined to think of some of our great presidents as men who have been outstanding moral characters.

When you are as old as I am, you can still remember learning in public school that George Washington never told a lie. Now, presidents still make that outlandish claim. They don't say, "I never told a lie." Now, they just say, "I will never lie to you." But essentially the same impression is made. But all you have to do is to study Mr. Washington's life to see how far he was from this myth concerning him. There is a famous incident which is related by some in biographies of Washington, in which he had been having difficulty with the British. And one of the greatest of his difficulties was the fact that his own soldiers, his officers, did not believe that he really had the men who could fight against the English. And finally, after a winter in Valley Forge, and the spring came and Washington thought that now was the time to do some attacking, he got his armies in order, and he was making some advances toward the British as they were making their way from Philadelphia to New York. And at one particular point at Monmouth, the opportunity came to crush the British. And so, with Anthony Wayne and Dickey Butler and some other general they made a strong attack. And one of the key points in this particular engagement was to be the arrival of Major General Charles Lee with some reinforcements. But just as Wayne and Butler were leading their troops to victory, Lee, instead of coming to their succor as has been planned, retreated rapidly, because he believed the American soldiers were incompetent to fight the British.

Now, of course you know this no relation to General Robert E. Lee. [Laughter] Well, Washington happened to come upon the General with his soldiers and he shouted out to Lee, "What's the meaning of all this, Sir? I desire to know the meaning of all this disorder and confusion." And General Lee rasped back, "By God sir, the American soldiers cannot fight the British Grenadiers." And said Washington, "By God, they can fight any upon the face of the earth. You are a blankety blank poltroon," which is a word

that means a coward, which I assume is about five degrees lower than a jellyfish.

[Laughter] At least it seems that way to me.

Ambrose Bierce once said concerning a coward is that "He is a person who in a perilous emergency thinks with his legs." [Laughter] I rather like that definition of a coward. But the biography goes on to speak about Washington and there was a man by the name of Charles Scott who was there. And he describes what happened. He says, "The Commander-in-Chief swore on that day until the leaves shook on the trees, charmingly and delightfully." And then he went on to say, "He swore like an angel from heaven." It's quite evident that the President whom some of us were taught never did tell a lie, was a sinner, after all.

Now, the doctrine of the sinlessness of Christ is taught, you can see very clearly from the word of God, but what about some of these passages that seem to teach otherwise? And so, I want you to turn first to the passage in Mark chapter 10, and let me read verse 18, which might seem to suggest that our Lord Jesus is not a sinless being. In verse 17 we read, "And as he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him and began asking him, Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life. And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." Now, this passage is a very difficult passage. I think anyone reading it must grant that. Dr. Alvin McClain, who was President of Grace Theological Seminary, used to say about it, "I used to hurry past this passage as one does past a grave yard." Because he could not explain with a great deal of ease our Lord's answer to the rich young ruler. "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."

Three different interpretations have been placed upon this, and I'm sure you could guess the first one. The first one is the interpretation of the Arians who did not believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was very God of very God. The Arians felt that our Lord repudiated the predicate good. That is, that he was saying that he was not good. Athanasius explicitly mentions their espousal of this view that the Lord Jesus says here

that he was not good. Now, in modern works it's been turned around and instead of saying that our Lord Jesus did not take this word good as a description of himself. Modern theologians say that this is a text in which our Lord Jesus confesses his sin. And the 18th verse is supposed to be his confession. "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God only."

Now, of course, we would know that this is not the interpretation if we just paid attention to the context. Because in verse 21 we read, "And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, One thing you lack. Go and sell all you possess and give it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me." The very fact that he would say to this person, "Follow me," is evidence of the fact that he did not consider this to be a confession of sin on his part.

Now, another interpretation that has been put upon it is the interpretation of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. Professor Warfield says that Jesus is not contrasting himself with God in any way, that when he says, "Why do you call me good?" we should not stress the "me." For the little word me, the pronoun, is enclitic here, Professor Warfield points out and should not bear emphasis, that the important word is the word "good." "Who do you call me good?" So it's an incitement to inquiry Professor Warfield says. It is the Lord's desire to have the rich young ruler think about what he has said. "What good thing shall I do?" So he is asking him to think about what he's said. He is good. In fact, he is really good. And to seek to find a new prescription for eternal life apart from the revealed will of God is really an impious denial of God. You see what Professor Warfield is saying. He is saying that the Lord intended the rich young ruler to think about God's goodness, and for him to say, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" By using the term good and applying it to the Lord Jesus, he does not think sufficiently about God being the source of all good." And so, our Lord is simply trying to turn him around so that he will think about God as the source of all good, and

consequently there is no hope of any kind of salvation except in so far as one is related to him.

Well, I have great respect for Professor Warfield, of course, as most of you know. But I do not think that that is true to the context of this passage, even though he labors over a number of pages to seek to establish this interpretation, which he derived from a German interpreter by the name of Adolph Schlatter. It seems to me that what follows is not explainable by that theory at all. So I rather think that the explanation of the ancient fathers is the correct one. The great mass of the older interpreters of the Bible, down through the centuries, from the earliest times on through the time of Augustine, have understood this in a different way. It is an incitement to inquiry, but it includes attention to the Lord himself. When this man came to the Lord Jesus he said, "Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Now notice, he comes as a pelagian. He comes thinking that a person can get to heaven by the things that he does. "What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Or what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He thinks that eternal life is something that is earned. He has put himself in the way of the law for justification. He has said, in effect, I think that a person in order to have eternal life must do some work. Now, this man, of course, needs to know his status as a sinner. That's what he really needs to know. So our Lord will use the Law as it should be used. One of its foremost uses is to convince of sin. And so he asks this person, in the 18th verse, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God." Then he adds, "You know the commandments." And he mentions them. But the man says to him, "Teacher, I've kept all these things from my youth up." And then the Lord Jesus says, "One thing you lack, go and sell you possess and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me." So he causes this man to look inward on himself in order to see his own sin.

Now, does he, however, in doing this, does he confess any sin on his own part when he does not say that he is good? Well, as a matter of fact, he does not say that he is

not good, does? We read in verse 18, "Why do you call me good?" He doesn't say, "I'm not good." He says, "No one is good, except God alone." You see, what he wants this man to do is to think about what he has said. He's used an adjective agathos, good. Now, that adjective belongs only to deity in its ultimate sense, therefore one must if one uses this correctly know the sense in which it is used. Now, he has said, "Good master." What does master mean? Well, it's the word for teacher. Good, an adjective that applies to God is attached to a noun, which means teacher. Now, of course, it is possible for this to be a reference to God, for God is a teacher. Our Lord Jesus is a divine teacher, but if you take an adjective that applies only to God, and you attach it to a noun. And you understand that noun in the sense of a human being, then you have misused the term good. That's what our Lord wants him to think about. He wants him to reply to him, "But Lord, you are God. That's why I used the term agathos." Now, if he had said that the Lord Jesus would have said, "I have not found so great faith, no not in all of Israel." That's why he said, "Why called Thou me good." He wanted to elicit from him an opinion about his own person. And he says, "There is none good but one, that is God." What makes this so interesting is the term "the good" was a term that was used in Judaism for God. So our Lord was warning him against the use of such a hallowed term in a merely conventional manner, good teacher.

Now, the fact that Lord Jesus understands himself to be God is evident by what I pointed to a moment ago, that he will point to himself and say to that man, "Follow me." "One thing you lack. Go and sell all that you possess and give it to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me." Now, that particular command is the prerogative of God, even so far as we know, no prophet ever presumed to say to people, "Come follow me." Even the Apostle Paul, when he said, "Be imitators of me," added, "As I am an imitator of the Lord." No individual ever said, "Come follow me" with the authority of God, except the Lord Jesus. Even the great Samuel, who was unshakeable in his integrity, he asked the children of Israel, "What have done to defraud

you?" They said nothing. But he doesn't say, "Follow me." Samuel says, "Turn not aside from following the Lord." Even in that very passage where his own integrity is expressed. So you see this is not a passage in which our Lord confesses his sinfulness. It's simply a passage in which he asks this man who is on the works way of salvation to take a good look at himself to see that he has misused the term good if he attaches it to a word teacher in the human sense. That what he really needs to do is to see the character of the Law. You say you've kept the Law perfectly, well he cites the Law for him. "Don't murder. Don't commit adultery. Don't steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not defraud. Honor your father and mother." This is the second table of the Law, the kind of thing that can be tested by ones activates. And then to sum it up, because he knew that this person's real difficulty was that he couldn't keep the Law because he loved his possessions better than the Law, he said to him, "One think you lack," after this man has made the monstrous claim to have fulfilled all of those passages. The Lord says, "One thing you lack," and this will prove that he just made a false profession. "Go and sell all that you possess and give it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven. And come follow me." But at these words, his face fell, and "He went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property." This is not a confession of sin on the part of our Lord. It is actually within the context, an affirmation of his deity.

If I may illustrate this, we all have heard of rulers who wanting to find out what conditions were like in their kingdoms, disguised themselves. The Emperor Joseph II did this through his vast kingdom in Middle Europe. And he went about in the land asking about the king. "What do you think about the King?" I imagine he heard a lot of very interesting things. But now, if someone had bowed down to him, and had given him the worship and the reverence that was due the king, not knowing that it was the king, then of course, he would be guilty of treachery against the king. And so a great deal depends on what you know when you affirm that the Lord Jesus is good. So "Good master," and our Lord's reply is a reply designed to have this man think about what he has said.

Now, the second thing that I was to say just a word about is the baptism of the Lord Jesus. By the way, I did mean to say this; you'll notice the Lord's answer is "Why do you call me good? No one is good except the Father." He doesn't say that. He says, "No one is good, except God alone." Now, God is a term that refers to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He doesn't say "No one is good except the Father," for all three persons are good. Now, the baptism of the Lord Jesus, that created acute difficulties in the early church, no doubt. It seemed to say, since he went to John who preached a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, that the Lord Jesus Christ was baptized in repentance for his sins. What made it more difficult for them was that nowhere in rabbinic writers do you find any hint of the baptism of the Messiah, nor of the descent upon him of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. And so this seemed a strange thing that he would be baptized by John the Baptist, who preached a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. But the very embarrassment that this caused the church, this incident, is itself the strongest evidence of the genuineness of the account. Would the church invent an incident that was an embarrassment to her? No, of course not. But the church never sensed that this baptism of the Lord Jesus by John the Baptist was any embarrassment to her. They did not see any contradiction between our Lord's sinlessness and his baptism by John the Baptist.

And of course, the reason for it is that the meaning of the baptism is that the Lord Jesus identifies himself with those in Israel, and he was an Israelite, who were morally in right relationship to the Lord, expecting the coming of the King. He had no sins to confess, but as an Israelite he must demonstrate that he had the positive dedication to the purpose of God to expect the Messiah, like the children of Israel should have had. And so he goes to his baptism not to confess sins, but as he says, "To fulfill all righteousness," to take his place as an Israelite whose heart is right towards God, who longs for the coming of the Messianic king. He, of course, is that king. And that's why he was baptized.

Now, one final thing, we learn from Hebrews chapter 5, verse 8 and 9, that the Lord Jesus learned obedience by the things that he suffered. Let me read the verses. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." He learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Does the concept of ethical development accord with the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus? Is it possible for our Lord to learn obedience and at the same time be sinless throughout all the process of learning? Well, the clause suggests a contrast between his exalted station as the second and the necessity of the suffering. Notice what it says in the 8th verse, "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things that he suffered." So that in the text itself that speaks of obedience, we have a text that stresses his exalted position. Though he was such a person as a Son, he nevertheless learned obedience by the things that he suffered. The point of the author is simply this, that our Lord Jesus as a man in his human nature, must pass from immaturity to maturity. He must advance in wisdom and stature, with God and with men. He learns obedience in the sense that he enters into all of the experiences of life obeying. The Bible does not say he learned to obey. The Bible says he learned obedience. He never had to learn to obey. He had to find the will of God just as you and I do, but when the will of God was given him by his Father he obeyed. And he experienced obedience, and he learned of it by his obedience. He did not have to learn to obey. You cannot say our Lord did not obey, but then there came a time when he did obey. No, he learned obedience through the experiences of life that were put upon him by the Father.

One of the Dutch theologians [Indistinct] a very fine man, has expressed this very well. He said, "Christ himself, though not inconstant in the sense of less faithful, was none-the-less as bearer of natural creaturely human life, subject to the Law of undulation. That is, a movement from immaturity to maturity, capable of learning, susceptible of accretion in his temporal human existence. In his fidelity he was constant, always faithful,

but not impassive. He was not a petrification. So he always obeyed, but he advanced through the experience of constant obedience, and thus gained in his human nature status before the Lord and before men. I guess the greatest illustration of this is the Gethsemane account where he's on the ground as almost like a worm writhing with the suffering of the will of God, crying out, "Oh my God, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But that there was no disobedience is evident by the word that he adds, "Yet, not my will be done, but Thine." In other words, he learned obedience through the experience of obedience, with all the suffering that that involved in a human nature that was sinless. And so in the splendid willingness to drink the cup, we see the conquest of the trials of life in the Son of God.

So the point is not a transition from disobedience to obedience, but from obedience to further obedience and finally to perfection, by which, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "He became to all who obey him the source of eternal salvation." He is the sinless Son of God. All of the tests of life only reveal him to be exactly what he was without sin. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for the privilege of considering the person of our Lord. We acknowledge the supreme worth of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. We rejoice in his sinlessness, in his impeccability and all of the other things that mark him out as the unique Son of God. And we praise Thee that he has become our Savior by virtue of the obedient work of the cross, the final climactic work of obedience by which we have life. May our devotion to him, Lord...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]