



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 10:19-25

“Entering the Heavenly Sanctuary”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we turn to Thee with thanksgiving for the word of God. We thank Thee for the enlightenment that comes to us as the Holy Spirit causes us to understand the Scriptures. And we reflect, Lord, upon how terrible it would be if we did not have the word of God. And, living in our day, particularly, when there are so many voices clamoring for attention and submission, it's marvelous to have the unchanging word of God, to which we can go, knowing that we have a word from heaven. We thank Thee for the living word, our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the triune God in heaven, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We thank Thee for the possessions that we have spiritually and, Lord, move us, motivate us, and enable us to use our possessions in a way that will honor Thee, glorify Thy name, and be the means of blessing to the believers and many others who are not yet believers. We commit ourselves to Thee and we pray Thy blessing upon us this evening as we look again into the Epistle to the Hebrews. We thank Thee for the sanctuary to which we are invited. Enable us, Lord, to truly approach and enjoy Thy presence.

For we pray, In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for this evening is “Entering the Heavenly Sanctuary” and it's rather interesting that when we enter the heavenly sanctuary that what we are pointed to are certain duties that are ours. This is not the time to talk about duties and responsibilities. Our society today, not

only in the United States, but throughout the face of this globe, it seems, has forgotten that we are ultimately responsible to the Lord God. Duties, responsibilities are unpopular words among us, it would seem, because it seems so obvious that we are responsible to God in Heaven, and that we do have as a responsibility to that duties but rarely is the subject brought up very significantly.

This passage invites us to enter the Sanctuary, where the triune God is. And then, on the grounds of that and probably by the means of that, we are brought to three specific solemn duties. You'll notice the statements in verse 22, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” Verse 23, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope.” And then verse 24, “Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.”

It seems to me, as I reflect on the nature of modern-day Christianity, that what we have done is to romanticize the Christian life into crusades, campaigns, the miraculous, the mystical, or just good fellowship. In fact, the very fact that many of our churches now have attached the name fellowship to them, may suggest that. Actually, I wrote that down before I reflected upon that, but probably there is some connection.

But, there is more to the Christian life than fellowship and that's evident here. Duty. Well, there was a very well-known preacher in New York, just in a few years back, David Reed, who has some interesting suggestions to make with reference to that. He says, “There are two familiar hymns that begin with the words ‘awake my soul, stretch every nerve, and press with vigor on.’ And the other, even more famous was written a century before by Bishop Ken, and it runs, ‘awake my soul and with the sun thy daily stage of duty run.’”

Now, Dr. Reed said, “These are two contrasting moods and each profoundly Christian. They both suggest a way of beginning the day, a kind of ‘getting up’ prayer, as we roll out of bed and stretch our limbs. The one, ‘awake my soul, stretch every nerve, and press with vigor on,’ is a kind of trumpet call to action, a summons to the thrill and adventure of the Christian life. The other, designed perhaps for those who don't like trumpet calls at 7:30,” I'm included there [Laughter] “contains a very plain reminder that the Christian life is also a matter of ordinary Christian duty. It is

a sober solemn and slightly uncomfortable hymn,” and he said, “It’s been omitted from our hymn book.”

Now, the picture that we get today that the Christian life is only excitement, energy, happiness, surprise, and, of course, there is a sense in which that is a very definite part of the Christian life but at the same time, it’s not the whole of it and we would do well, David Reed said, “To listen again to the lines, ‘Awake my soul and with the sun, Thy daily stage of duty run.’”

What is interesting about it is that it reflects also our Lord’s attitude, which sometimes we forget was his too. He tells a little story in Luke, chapter 17. It’s a parable and, of course, it’s a parable that has to do with the day in which he lived, and he’s talking about a man who has a servant. And he writes this.

“And which of you having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat?’ But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink?’ [And, you’ll notice there is a little emphasis upon ‘gird yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunk, and afterwards you will eat and drink.’ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? Our Lord says, ‘I think not.’ So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants and we have done what was our duty to do.’”

I’m sure that the people who heard that parable laughed, at least, at one stage in it. When He said, do you image when the servant returns from the duties that he is supposed to do, that the master would meet him at the door and say, thank you for the work that you’ve done today. Come over and sit down here and I’ll get your supper. I’m sure that they had a very good laugh over that. What our Lord is saying is something rather harsh, isn’t it? Do what you are supposed to do and then regard that as a duty. It’s not something for which you are to get thanks. But it’s something

that you have commanded to do. And as a matter of fact, the thanks do not go with it. “So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants and we have done what was our duty to do.’” That’s almost a brutal story, but it’s our Lord’s parable, and it reflects the emphasis that our Lord lays upon doing the will of God. That’s very important, it seems to me.

Now, we’ve come to Hebrews chapter 10 in verse 19, and the picture in Hebrews is somewhat similar. The climax has now been reached with verse 18, where we have seen that our author has written the words, there is no more offering for sin. “Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.” And this, we said last time, echoing the words of several of the commentators, one specifically, Bishop Westcott, “This is the last, the decisive word of the argument.” But, as you well know if you’ve heard any kind of Bible exposition or read books on the Bible which have some notes in the margins, you’ll know that the education that you received from reading the word of God, the growth in the knowledge of the truth is to lead to personal appropriation of it. Or, put in another way, doctrine has as its goal duty, responsibilities. And now, the author turns to that.

In fact, this is the decisive, dividing point in the book and so, from chapter 1, verse 1 through chapter 10, verse 18, we’ve had exposition of the saving work of the Messiah, the great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. But now, characteristic of the last chapters will be appeal to those who are reading it. In the first section, we have had privileges set forth and now responsibilities. The first section is doctrinal, the last section is largely experiential, not completely, nor is the first completely doctrinal. But that’s the general tenor.

There is a statement made in the Heidelberg Catechism, at a particular point, that goes like this. After certain truths have been set forth, the Catechism says, “But what now does it help you, if you believe all these things?” *Was hilft es dir aber nun, wenn du dies alles glaubst?* In other words, it really doesn’t help us a lot if we simply believe them. But they are things that are to be done. So our author is coming to that.

Now, I have a friend in Houston, I haven't seen him in a long time and haven't talked to him in a long time, but he always had a happy way of communicating. And he would say, “This is simply passing from phase one to phase two.” Phase one having to do with doctrine; phase two having to do with application. The author says, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter.” In one sense, that's the summary again of the first half of the book. Then, “let us draw near” is the summary of the second part of the book.

“Having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.” Then, verse 22, “Let us draw near.” Well, I want to concentrate on these duties, particularly, and so we'll look at the first one, which is the work of faith. Let me go back and read again now, verse 19 through verse 22.

“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”

This is really the end of the divine redemption; to draw near to our Lord Jesus Christ and to live in communion with him. You may remember when the Lord Jesus chose the apostles in Mark's account, he said that the reason that they chose them was that they might be what? With him, with him. In other words, they were chosen first and foremost to be with our Lord. They would learn more from that than almost anything else. I don't want to discount what he said, of course, because both are important. But the order is proper, to be “with him,” and then that they might go forth and preach the things that they have learned from being with him. So, this is the first great duty; worship, the work of faith. Why we may worship? Well, he tells us in these three verses, 19, 20, and 21.

Having: there are two things we have and these are the keys to worship. First of all, he says, “having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.” And then the second thing he says is, “And having,” verse 21, “a High Priest over the house of God.” We have, first of all a blood bought

way. You may remember that the veil of the tabernacle, the veil of the temple, specifically, was not removed. It was “rent.” The suggestion itself, the rent veil, is suggestive of his death. The veil was rent and so, here, “By a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.”

Now, there are some interesting questions here and we don’t have time to talk about them this evening. We’ll just take the text as we have it here, “through the veil, that is, His flesh.” Now, if the veil is “his flesh,” what it might suggest to us is the fact that the veil must be rent, if there is to be access into the Holiest of All. That is, it must be moved, it must be removed. And so if the veil is his flesh, it would suggest that there must be a death in order for entrance into the Holiest of All. And the veil being removed, being rent, the veil of the temple rent in twain, the tabernacle rent, the veil removed would be a reference to his death. And there is some discussion over this and I don’t want to get into the details of it. It’s entirely possible that all that’s meant here is simply that it’s through our Lord’s death that he enters into the Holiest of All. At least, it’s important to note that it is by “blood bought way” that our Lord enters into the Holiest of All. He must die and then he ascends into Heaven and enters the presence of the Lord as the great Priest. The flesh rent, before He could enter and before we could enter there must be a crucified Savior. In other words, there is no such thing as access apart from a crucified savior, an un-crucified savior is no savior for us at all. So we need to keep that in mind, that fundamental to his thinking is the necessity of the death of the great High Priest.

The second thing he says we have in verse 21, is that we have a High Priest “over the house of God.” The original text says simply, “a great priest,” but that was a common way to speak of the high priest, and so he’s suggesting that the work of faith and the worship that should result from it comes from the blood bought way into the Holiest through the sacrifice of Christ, and the presence of the High Priest at the right hand of the Throne of God.

Now, that is what we have. That’s what we have; that’s the provision that we have and, consequently, we are called upon to use it. So he tells us how we ought to worship. In verse 22, he says, “Let’s draw near, and first of all, with a true heart.”

Now, when he says “a true heart,” it’s very interesting to contrast what he might have said. Let us enter with a very clear head. Now, that’s important, of course. I am sure that all of us love to read the Scriptures and, finally, come to an understanding of them so that we have a clear head with regard to their teaching. But, what he is stressing here, first of all, is a true heart, a genuine heart, not with a clear head, that, of course, will follow, as we spend time in the presence of the Lord. And so the thing that God asks for is our hearts. The thing that he asks of us is submission to him. He wants us. Of course, he wants us according to the provisions of the word of God, but he wants us, and that, I think, is something that we need to underline. He wants us! He doesn’t want our religion. He doesn’t want our professions. Doesn’t want our experiences, which may or may not be in harmony with the word of God. He wants us, first of all!

Now, let me ask you a question? Do you ever get down upon your knees and offer a pray to the Lord in which you ask him to give you the experience of dwelling in the Holiest? Do you ask him to enable you to give your heart to him? Because, giving your heart to the Lord is not easy. That’s difficult! That’s very difficult. I think, it’s extremely important for you to get down by the side of your bed or your chair, or wherever it is that you offer serious pray to the Lord, and ask him to so move in your heart, that you truly give yourself to him, so that it could be said of you that you are worshipping with a true heart. It’s not a natural attribute for us to wish to get out upon our knees and offer ourselves to the Lord. It’s so easy to avoid that. So easy to have other things. It’s so easy to say, I don’t really have time to do that. I would love to do that right now, but I just don’t have time to do it. I’ve got to go to work or I’ve got to put supper on the table, or I have to call so and so. All the kinds of little duties that go on through the day and the end of the day, we have not done what we said to ourselves we wanted to do. So, I think, it’s very important that we do precisely what he’s talking about; “Draw near with a true heart,” truly draw near. I don’t think you have to get

down upon your knees. You can do it, driving the automobile, but I hope I'm not on the same street where you are driving. [Laughter] But, it can be done. It can be done. You can do whatever you are doing in the presence of the Lord. That is very true. I don't have any question of that. But, it also is good to get down upon your knees and offer your prayers to him.

It's not a natural attribute, I say, it's something that comes to us by divine grace. But, what we have, worshipping him with a true heart, we have it only if we do enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.

The second way in which we worship, he said, is in “full assurance of faith.” Faith! Faith, not feeling; you may not feel too great, when you get down upon your knees and offer your prayers to the Lord. You may even feel, at times, as if your prayers are not being heard. That's a very common experience of Christians. They get down upon their knees, they offer their words and how many of us have heard Christians say, “I felt that my prayers did not get any higher than the ceiling of the room in which I was when I prayed.” You see, the great thing about Scripture, of course, is that if you truly offer a pray to the Lord with, as he says here, a “true heart” whether you feel that they have gone to God or not, they have. And, he has heard them. And that should give us confidence. It's faith, not feeling, that counts. Feeling is something, of course, that may or may not be there. And, as the years go by in your Christian experience, you will find more sense of feeling the truth of God. But if you are looking for feeling before faith, you will be disappointed. This is full assurance of reliance upon him.

And then, he says, “with our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” Now, this is the imagery of the blood and water, which is the imagery derived from the high priestly work of carrying out his priesthood, because he was anointed with blood, his body was washed with water. And so the idea lying back of it is the imagery of the priests, and we, of course, are priests of the great High Priest, and so with “our hearts sprinkled and our bodies washed” we enter his presence. And, I think, also, that since we have the imagery of the blood and then the water, that probably we are justified in thinking of the blood as suggestive of divine justification from

guilt because that is what we have as a result of the blood shed on Calvary’s Cross; and then, of the cleansing from the filth of sin that is suggested by the washing of the water, and you know, in the New Testament, in several places, that figure is used of that. This is the basis of our approach; having our hearts sprinkled, our bodies washed. Just like the High Priest had to be consecrated to his task, we have that in Exodus chapter 29, and Leviticus chapter 8, set forth. And since you are reading through the Bible, aren’t you? I’m on my third time. I finished the second time. I’m at about Genesis, chapter 25. No I am more than that. No, I’m a little more than that. Thank you, Dan, for making the suggestion at the beginning of the year, that it’d be good for people in Believers Chapel to read through their Bible this year. And that was kind of the catalyst that made me go ahead and make the decision and I’ve enjoyed it. Martha’s seen less of me. She’s had less conversation from me. Blessing? But, at any rate, I’m on my third time, hoping to finish, the Lord willing, by December the 31st.

Now, he talks about where we should worship, too. He said in verse 19, “Brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.” And then, in verse 22, “Let us draw near.” So the Holiest is the place where we are near to the Lord. It’s to draw near to him by faith. A fellow could bring their animal and stand by the brazen altar as the priest slew the animal and sprinkled the blood, did his priestly work with the blood, that was approach to that which represented the presence of God. And then, the priests themselves, of course, they were able to enter into the holy place, and they were able to minister there. And, in fact, the blood could be sprinkled upon the golden altar of incense in the holy place, and so the priests had a little bit more of a physical approach to the Lord God. And, on the one day, the Day of Atonement, remember, the high priest and the high priest alone could enter into the presence of the Lord and accomplish the sacrificial work that made Israel acceptable to the Lord for one more year. In a sense, there are these steps in approaching the Lord God. There are, we know, many Christians, all Christians, of course, have been sprinkled with the blood and washed by water if they belong to the Lord, but there are some who have deeper experiences than others. And, perhaps, that threefold kind of approach suggests the possibility for

you and me. That is, that many of us are like those who bring the animal to the tabernacle and do not have a closer relationship to the Lord. There are some of us that have a closer relationship. And then there are some special ones who have a relationship of really becoming acquainted in a most intimate way with the provision that the Lord makes for his saints. My hope, for each of you is that that would be your experience and, of course, it's my hope for me too.

Now, the second duty in verse 23, he says, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.” The confession of our hope. Christians have great hope.

Today, I was reading something in a new commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews and it had to do with hope. It had to do, actually, with hopelessness, which is the lot of an honest secularist. If a secularist is honest, he would admit he doesn't have any hope. Some of them are honest. Bertram Russell, a great philosopher, was honest. And this is what he had to say about hope. “The labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins. Only within the scaffolding of the truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.” What hopelessness! “Only upon the firm foundation of unyielding despair can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.” Our author says, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.”

The experience of Christians is of their hope. Listen to Chrysostom. Chrysostom was brought before the Roman Emperor and the Emperor threatened him with banishment, if he remained a Christian. This is what Chrysostom said in this little conversation with him, “You cannot banish me for this world is my Father's house.” “But I will slay you,” the Emperor said. “No, you cannot,” said the noble champion of the faith, “for my life is hid with Christ, in God.” “I'll take away your treasures,” the Emperor said. “No, but you cannot, for my treasure is in Heaven and my heart is there.” “But I will drive you away from man and you shall have no friend left.” “No, you

cannot. For I have a friend in heaven from which you cannot separate me. I defy you. For there is nothing you can do to hurt me.” Well, let us hold fast the “confession of our hope,” without wavering, “for he who promised is faithful.”

Now, the entrance into the Holiest of All, of course, is suggestive of the beginning of life and this is a continuation of it. We are holding fast the confession of our faith. Faith looks to the past. Hope looks to the future. One accepts the promise, the other enjoys it. So let us hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering; testify that we are strangers, forsake the pleasures of sin, we rejoice in tribulations. These are the things that mark the individual who is truly holding fast the confession of his hope. Mr. Spurgeon says, “Hope walks the streets of gold, already hears the songs of the redeemed.”

But now, notice the reason that lies back of it. He says, “For He who promised is faithful.” That is, the promises are connected with the promisor, so all of the promises of the word of God are the words of God and, thus, their authority, their power, is the fact that they proceed out of the mouth of God, and, thus, the authority and power of God lies behind them. The word of God, these are living, vital, words of God. That’s what the author says, remember, back in chapter 4. Chapter 4 in verse 12, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” He is faithful, who has made the promise.

Now, I believe in what is called the Five Points of Calvinism. Surprise? No surprise. Paul believed in them. Peter believed in them. Our Lord is the foundation of them, what he accomplished on Calvary’s Cross, the doctrine that we are sinners and are unable to turn to the Lord God is the ground of it all. “No man can come to Me except the Father who sent Me draws him.” So the Lord Jesus said. That’s total depravity, isn’t it? At least, it’s total inability. We may not like the term, total depravity; there are some people who do some good things. That’s harmonious with the doctrine, incidentally, if you understand the doctrine.

But, at any rate, we, I and a few others, affirm that there is such a teaching in the word of God as total inability, unconditional election, not grounded upon our foresight of faith. Wouldn't it be terrible to have a God who looked down through the years and grew wiser as the days went by? Who looked down through the years and he saw that Lewis Johnson would believe. I'll choose him, he's going to believe. Why, you wouldn't need to be chosen if you knew he was going to believe. There'd be no reason for election, if you knew he was going to believe. The whole idea of election would be destroyed by the Arminian suggestion.

Definite atonement, particular redemption, irresistible grace; and then, the perseverance of the saints. What does that mean? Does that mean the saints always live the life pleasing to the Lord God? No, it doesn't. You wouldn't deny that Jacob was one of the saints, would you? Have you ever studied Jacob's life? What kind of a man was he? Why, he was a man who was crooked. Many things he did were contrary to the word of God. And yet, at the end of the life, he talks about the “God who fed me all the days of my life.”

Faith may exist, fundamental faith even may exist, even in the life of an individual who's displeasing the Lord here and there because the sin principle is still dwelling in his members. And Jacob, what an illustration he is of the sanctifying work of God over a lengthy period of time.

I know some of you in this audience, I know something about some of you, I don't know a whole lot about some of you, too, but I know something about some of you, and I know that your experience is somewhat like Jacob's experience. And if you think I'm wrong about you and right about myself, because that is precisely my experience.

Now, the last of the Calvinistic soteriological points was the perseverance of the saints. What does that mean then? Well, it fundamentally means that those who belong to Him are going to be in Heaven someday. They're not going to abandon the faith; not that they are not going to displease the Lord from time to time, but the faith that God has implanted in their hearts, for faith is a gift, that faith will hold through all the experiences of life. May strain it! But it will hold. That's the whole point of the perseverance of the saints. Now, we sometimes say, “Once saved, always

saved.” That’s true. Once truly saved always saved. But the perseverance of the saints stresses the fact that the faith that God implants in their hearts will always be there. Will carry them through. Because God will preserve them. The perseverance of the saints is a fact that arises out of his preservation.

Some of my friend don’t like to use the expression, “Once saved, always saved.” Because, in their eyes, it invites disobedience. So perhaps it’s better for us to use the perseverance of the saints. The other, however, I believe is, nevertheless, a truth. Perhaps, the best way to express it, and those of you who have heard me on this point know this, that what we are talking about really is simply eternal life. That’s the whole point. What we receive is eternal life. Not six months life. Not one year’s life. Not five years life. Not life until we sin. But eternal life. So it’s better, I think to call it the doctrine of eternal life. But perseverance of the saints is the common thing.

Look at what he says, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” He will carry out his purpose, which he has in saving us. A sense that, so as I read through the Bible, over and over again, one sees that. When God makes an unconditional promise, he fulfills it. I think the thing that’s impressed me, almost more than anything else reading through the Bible are those promises that God has made to faithless Israel. And over and over again, they’ve disobeyed him; they’ve rebelled against him. They’ve forgotten him. These are all expressions that are used in the Old Testament. They’ve forgotten him. But the promises still hold and they will be carried out.

So faithful is he who promised. What a comfort that is! These promises are the promises on which I rely; and on which you rely. He’s faithful! When we cling to them, you know he’s faithful, and we’re going to have those promises in their fullness.

And then, the final of the third great duty is mutual encouragement or the labor of love. And notice verse 24 and 25, “And let us consider one another to stir up love.” The Authorized Version says, “provoke.” And Bible teachers love to amuse you, and so they say some people but a period there. “Let us consider one another in order to provoke one another.” Well, my text doesn’t

say that. I can't tell that joke, so I just have to say they told a joke. “Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.”

Notice the three virtues; faith, hope, now love. Faith looks backward, hope forward, and love looks outward. So “Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.” That is, we consider one another, not for criticism, not for suspicion, not for comparison. What he is, I think, saying is that one cannot be drawn to the Lord without being drawn to those that belong to him. Otherwise, we are living in a kind of fantasy land, or a Shangri-La. Or what's your fantasy land? Las Vegas? [Laughter] I wouldn't want to live there. But, anyway, what ever it is, if you do not have what he says here, love for those who belong to the Lord, there is a question that arises.

By the way, how much time did you log this week criticizing other saints? How about it? Did you? I'm sure I did. If I'd known I was going to say this tonight, I would have avoided doing the whole week. [Laughter] But, I just happened to think about saying that today. So I'm sure that I have. And I'm ashamed of it. So “Let us consider one another to provoke or stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.” This is one of the means, negative and positive, for fulfilling the command, “consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.” Can't do that unless we're in the presence of one another. And so he naturally says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching.”

When a person forsakes the meeting of the saints, that's a sign of declining faith, generally, declining faith, decaying hope, dwindling love. We all have known it. In fact, some of us have experienced some of this. We're not eliminating ourselves. But we do know this, that if we do not meet with the saints, we suffer. The reason we are encouraged to meet with the saints is because there's great benefit in meeting with the saints. And these are means by which God fulfills his commands.

Now, in Believers Chapel, there are many, many scores of people who have sat in our pews, and some of them have sat for lengthy period of time in those pews and they are not sitting there

now. Some of them are not sitting there because they are in the presence of the Lord. We rejoice in that. But some are not sitting there and some are not sitting anywhere else regularly. The Scriptures set forth very plainly, that that is a departure from the truth of the Lord; that we are going to find that our faith will decline, our hope will become weaker, our love will dwindle, if we do not meet with the saints and receive encouragement from them and from the ministry of the word of God.

I think of a number of people, you know, I have two three names in here, but then I put an *et cetera* after them, because there are a number of them that could be put there. You could, of course, put other names too. I think of some specifically, that were very close to us, but are no longer with us. If there has been an advance, spiritually, we have to be happy about that. But we know, in many cases, that is not true. We're not saying that this is the only place where one can meet and grow in the knowledge of the Lord. I have to say, it's the best place. But, nevertheless, it's not the only place. We're not trying to say this is the only place. And we're not talking about those who have, really, an attitude toward the Lord that one would call a great attitude toward the Lord, and who meet with other believers who have good attitudes too. We're not talking about them. We're talking about those who were with us and now, their faith has declined. And they are not really meeting much with the saints at all. So what he is saying to us is that if we are to grow in the knowledge of the Lord and if we are to truly [audio indistinct] of hope unwaveringly, and there is also going to be the consideration of one another, the provocation of one another, to stir up love and good works.

In other words, an occupation with Him; with our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, you can think of the Emmaus disciples, as they are walking down the road toward Emmaus, and talking with the stranger, and he was drawing out from them what they felt about the things that had been happening. And then he expounded to them the Scriptures and, you remember, they said, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us along the way?” And so in occupation with him as he spoke from the Old Testament about him. They listened to his word. Their hearts were warmed and then the Scriptures say, they gathered together. So they gathered, met together, and then our Lord

departed from them. It's almost a parable of what it means to grow in the knowledge of the Lord, spend time with the Lord, listen to him as he, through the Spirit, expounds the word of God, enjoy the fellowship with him, eat with him and grow in grace in the knowledge of the Lord.

Well, our time is nearly up. The same spirit, let me say, by way of conclusion, the same Spirit who said, that the way into the Holiest was not made manifest in the Old Testament chapter 9, verse 8, the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. That same Spirit who said that the way was not yet made manifest, now invites us to enter the Holiest, by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I would suggest to you this; that the gift of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the gift of the sacrifice, the gift of the saving work for us, for that's what it is. It's the means by which all that he has promised to us, as his chosen ones, as his elect ones, will be accomplished. All of this is his great gift to us and that is an expression of the measure of the longing of the triune God in Heaven, for you to spend time in his presence, for you and me, so just reflect on that. What Christ did is the measure of the divine love for you. For you! For you people, right in this auditorium. You people. Julie, Frank, Monett, etc. For you! What a magnificent exhibition of divine love for us. That's what it is.

Now, there's one other thing, I think. He says, “brethren, therefore, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.” The measure of the boldness is the blood. That's the measure of the boldness that we should have. If our Lord Jesus Christ has shed his blood, has died violently, for you and for me, that is the measure of the acceptance that we have, for the eternal, infinite Son of God has offered a sacrifice for us, that has infinite value. Thus, the door is thrown open. We may be just as bold as the power of the blood of Christ, which is infinite.

O Lord, let this, the communion, the prayers, the sacrifice, all of the things that go to make up a spiritual life, let them be my life. That's my prayer. I imagine it's your prayer too. Growth into likeness, fruitfulness, acceptance, produced by entering the Holiest, by the blood of Christ, and

dwelling there. May the Lord so work in our hearts that we know something of the experience of this.

Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for these words. We surely feel, Lord, that we could never express the greatness of what our author has just told us. Lord, open our minds to understand. Open our hearts to respond. Open our very beings to be submissive to the truth and by Thy grace, use us for Thy glory. We pray for the body of believers who meet here in Believers Chapel and ask, Lord, that Thou wilt strengthen them and encourage them, bless them, supply their needs, use them. For those unable to meet with us and who have serious problems, who request that we pray for them, we remember them, Lord, and ask for each one of them, individually, that Thou wilt undertake for them, encourage them, build them up in the truth, supply their needs, give them to the sense of deliverance and blessing. Enable us all, Lord, to understand the depth of and the meaning of the experiences that are ours as human beings.

We thank Thee for the hope that we have, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.