



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 6:22-33

"Working the Works of God"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are reading this morning for our Scripture reading John chapter 6 verse 22 through verse 33. We have just had in the sixth chapter of John the recounting of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and then also the miracle of the walking upon the water. And now there follows some conversation that Jesus had with the men and women of his day and the theme is primarily a theme that arises out of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. That is, it is the theme of the Lord Jesus as the bread of life.

And remember, he had gone over to the eastern or northeastern side of the Sea of Galilee. There on the side of the hill about fifteen thousand people had gathered and had seen the feeding of that multitude and also other works that our Lord had performed, particularly of healing at that time. And then afterwards he had gone up in the mountain and the disciples had entered into the one boat that was by the side of the sea there and had made their way across to the west. So far as the people knew our Lord must still be in the vicinity. They were searching for him and as the account has unfolded the storm that arose in the midst of the sea was such that Jesus went to them walking upon the water. And the next day the multitude is looking for our Lord. They do not have any anticipation, of course, any thought about the fact that he might have walked on the water to the western side. Finally, not finding him they determined that they will go to Capernaum. And they do and conversation is begun between our Lord and the people.

We begin at verse 22 and John writes,

"The day following (that is after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand) the day following when the people who stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there except that one in to which the disciples had entered (or were entered) and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat that that his disciples were gone away alone. (And then John introduces a parentheses according to the version I'm reading.) Nevertheless, there came other boats from Tiberius near unto the place where they did eat bread and the Lord had given thanks."

The reason that these boats came is that they'd heard there was a multitude there on the other side of the lake and thinking that they would make some money by ferrying them back to the west. They had come in the morning and so there they were -- boats to take the people back to the other side.

"When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took boats and came to Capernaum seeking for Jesus. (They came to Capernaum because that was our Lord's headquarters at this time.) And when they had found him on the other side of the sea they said unto him, 'Rabbi, when camest thou here?' Jesus answered them and said, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles but because ye did eat of the bread and were filled. Labor not for the food which perisheth but for that food which endureth unto everlasting life which the Son of man shall give unto you for him hath God the Father sealed.'"

That last statement, incidentally I won't comment on it in the message. It means that the Father has sealed in the sense that he has attested the authority of the Son of God.

"Then said they unto him, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?' Jesus answered

and said unto them, 'This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' They said therefore unto him, 'What signs showest thou then that we may see and believe thee? What is thy work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert. As it is written he gave the bread from heaven to eat.' Then Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven for the bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.'

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

We are continuing our exposition of the Gospel of John. And the subject for today is "Working the works of God." The title derived from the statement that the Lord Jesus makes in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John in the 29th verse in which answering a question, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" says, "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom He hath sent."

That raises the question of, "What is a true Christian?" Some are very broad and very generous in their answers to a question like this and their definitions therefore are very generous and very broad. Some say a true Christian is anyone who is living in the general traditions of our Western society. In other words, if we are living the kind of moral life that is generally characterized by the people who live in our part of the world then surely we are Christians. That is, we cook our food before we eat it. We don't tear it raw from the bone. We wear clothes that are similar to the clothes of others of our particular society. We have only one wife at a time.

There are also narrow views of what is a Christian. Some feel that a Christian is a very rare saintly kind of individual and that to make the grade a person must be a paragon of flawless virtue with an angelic disposition. Understand there are two people like that at the world in the present time. He must live somewhere far from ordinary behavior suspended between heaven and earth. And the kind of life that he lives is a kind of life that is not very realistic, doesn't have any real connection with the kind of life that most of us live. In fact, to describe them one thinks of the statement that

Jesus made when he said, "Many are called but few are chosen." And it is the few who are chosen who are Christians.

Well, as the little boy returning from Sunday school said, "Mother, today they talked about cold Christians." "Cold Christians?" the little boy's mother said. "What were they talking about?" "What did they say?" He said, "Well, they talked on that verse, 'Many are cold and few frozen.'" [Laughter] In our society it's not true, of course, that few are frozen. Quite a large percentage are frozen and a large part of those that are left are also cold.

But nevertheless, what is the answer to the question, "What is a true Christian?" Well, if we were to answer from the terms of our Lord here we would say that a Christian is an individual who has believed on him whom the father has sent. It's really as simple as that. And while of course that makes a tremendous change in a person's life and he begins thereafter to become something of a the kind of person that he ought to become as a representative of the Lord Jesus, that process of becoming what he is in position -- a saint in practice -- is that which takes the remainder of his life. And in fact, as long as we are in the flesh we are far from perfect, and the best of the Christians know that.

On the other hand, we know that there is a tremendous difference between a true Christian who has a true vital faith in Jesus Christ for his eternal salvation and those who are simply living according to the general social traditions of the United States of America. A Christian is a unique person. He has come into relationship to Jesus Christ and he is relying upon him and his atoning work for his ultimate destiny.

Well the Lord Jesus, having performed those two signs -- the last one is the fifth of the signs chosen by John to unfold in his book which he wants to be the means of bringing us to life. This fifth sign was the walking upon the water. And having left the scene and having walked upon the water to the disciples and gone over to the western side of the lake, the people who had been left who had been fed by the Lord Jesus were therefore seeking him. And they finally met him around Capernaum and the result is a very interesting conversation or series of conversations that takes

place. These conversations that take place are conversations that arise out of questions. And as you look over the remainder of the sixth chapter you can pick out the questions that are the occasion of the discussion that follows.

For example in verse 25 they ask him when they find him, "Rabbi, when camest thou here?" And then in verse 42 after they've discussed issues that arise out of that question we read, "And they said, 'Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, 'I came down from heaven.'" And that is discussed. And in verse 52 we see the third of the questions, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" And after that is discussed in the sixtieth verse of the chapter we have the final question, "This is a hard saying. Who can hear it?" So these four questions are the occasion for the conversations or dialogues that follows.

The first of these dialogues, or the first of the conversations, begins in verse 25 and does not really conclude until verse 40. But in view of the fact that we don't have time to consider all of the conversation in that section we're going to concentrate our attention on the first part of the conversation. And we'll look at three individual dialogues that took place.

Notice in verse 25 it says, "And they said unto him," and then they ask the question. And then in verse 28 we read again, "Then said they unto him." And finally in verse 30 we read, "They said therefore unto him." So three times they say, "And they said," and the Lord responds to their words. And so we want to take up these three dialogues that the Lord Jesus has with the individuals who have now found him in Capernaum in the northwestern side of the Sea of Galilee.

The first dialogues have to do with two methods of seeking. They say to him in verse 25, "'Rabbi, when camest thou here?' And Jesus answered and said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, you seek me not because you saw the signs but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the food which perisheth but for that food which endureth unto everlasting life which the son of man shall give unto you for him hath God the Father sealed." So the question is, "Lord, when camest thou here?" And the Lord Jesus looking back behind the words that they were saying addressed his response to their internal feelings. And so he said, "You seek me not because you saw

the miracles but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." And the word that is used translated filled here is a word that was often used of animals that were filled. And so the Lord Jesus said, "You're really not seeking me because of the spiritual understanding that you desire concerning the things that really count. What you are seeking me for is because I feed the fifteen thousand people that were there, and you ate of the bread of the fish and you were filled." And so instead of seeing in the bread a sign of the authority and saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the sign they beheld only the bread. Now, that I think is a beautiful illustration of the fact that the natural receiveth not the things of the spirit of God. "They are foolishness unto him neither can he know them. They are spiritually discerned."

Isn't it a testimony to the truthfulness of the Bible that when the eternal word of God is spoken so many are absolutely dead to the teaching of the Scriptures. They do not respond at all. They have no interest whatsoever and what they hear is not the eternal word of God, but they only look on the outward side of things. They had been in the presence of one of the great miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ and what had they gotten out of it? He gives physical bread. That's all. They had failed to understand the significance of the mighty miracle and that to which it pointed. So instead of seeing in bread the sign of his saving authority, his saving power, in the sign they beheld only the bread.

Now, we in 1982 are inclined to look back and say, "Well, that's the way people were in those days but we're not like those people." Well, that is simply not true. We are warned that we should not throw stones. And of course, it is true because the same kind of response that they had to the ministry of the word of God is the response that we give to it in the 20th Century. It is certainly true that when the word of God is proclaimed and proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit there are some who hear and there are some who are utterly impervious to the word of God. They have no conception of the things that they're listening to and when they leave they are just as lacking in spiritual understanding and spiritual interest as when they entered in.

And so the Lord Jesus warns, and in warning them he warns us. He states in the 27th verse,

"Labor not for the food which perisheth but for that food which endureth unto everlasting life which the son of man shall give unto you for him hath God the Father sealed." When you labor for the physical bread you labor for that which feeds you for only one day. Here they are on the next day looking for him again because they need new food for this new day. But if you have the food of the everlasting life which Jesus gives them you have that which is satisfying for time and for eternity. Someone might misunderstand our Lord's words because he does say labor and he says we're to labor for the food that endures. "Does not that suggest that Jesus is teaching that we ought to work for our salvation?" we might argue.

"Labor for the food that endureth unto everlasting life." Well, if we finish the sentence we will understand that the sense in which he uses the term labor is not the sense of doing good works for something but rather simply being concerned about it, to engage in the kind of activity by which we are responsive to the word of God and truly seek under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the initiative of the Holy Spirit the eternal life that is offered to us by God. Will you read the remainder of the sentence? He says, "Labor for the food that endureth unto everlasting life which the son of man shall give unto you." So this is a gift of God and we labor for it only in the sense that we are actively concerned to receive this gift that God provides because in the final analysis faith is an activity of man.

If we are totally passive we do not respond. But in the activity of faith, in the activity of receptiveness we have that by which eternal life is appropriated. But let us hasten to say that that concern that reaches out and says, "Thank you, " receiving the gift of God is itself the gift of God, something earned by the Lord Jesus Christ in the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross, for the Scriptures teach most plainly that faith is itself the gift of God.

Now, in the next of the dialogues in verse 28 and verse 29 the Lord Jesus speaks about two ways of working. One way of working is believing. Another way of working is true working. That is, gaining something by the merits of our works. They said unto him after he's said, "Labor for the food that endures," what shall we do that we might work the works of God? Now, what is striking

about this is that they have the understanding that they receive eternal life by the things that they do. Men want to do something in order to gain eternal life. One wonders why that is so. Why is it that individuals want to do something in order to gain eternal life?

Well, that arises out of a basic misunderstanding of what we are. We do not realize that we do not have anything in ourselves with which to commend ourselves to God, and so therefore we think that we can do something by which we can please God and gain eternal life. But the Bible teaches that we are lost and undone. And in fact, the Bible teaches that all of our human righteousnesses, the things that we think are righteous acts, all of our righteousnesses that we think are righteousnesses are anything but righteousnesses so far as God is concerned. In fact, the Bible says, "There is none righteous. No not one. There is none that seeketh after God naturally. No not one. There is none that doeth good. No not one." So how is it possible then for someone to gain eternal life by the things that they do when they cannot do anything that is good? You see, the only good acts that God accepts are those that arise out of faith and those that are directed toward the glory of God. And so until we have faith and until we understand the nature of our triune God it's impossible for us to do a good work. All other good works that men call good works are not good works by divine standards.

There's a whole lot of difference between the human standard and the divine standard, but unfortunately it is God's standards who count in our universe. Not ours. He's the one who operates this universe. He's the one who lays down the principles by which life is carried on and by which life is received. So what shall we do that we might work the works of God? They want to do something. You know in the Bible that is so beautifully reflected.

Do you remember what the rich young ruler said when he came to the Lord Jesus? He said, "What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Do you remember what the prodigal son said when he finally had come to himself and he had seen at least that his life was not what it used to be in the home of his family and father. He said that he was going to go back home and he was going to say these things to his father. And among the things that he would say would be, "Make me as one

of thy hired servants." In other words, he thought that he might please his father by the things that he did. When he came back the father went down the road and fell on his neck and began to kiss him, and he began to utter his little speak. The father didn't even let him get out the words, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," because that would have destroyed the illustration and the Lord Jesus was giving us an illustration of his God. He does not accept our good works as the basis of eternal life.

Do you remember what the Jews said when Peter had preached his great sermon on Pentecost to them? Well, they were convinced or convicted in heart. In fact, the Greek word means something like they were stabbed in the heart. And then they said, "Men, brethren, what shall we do?" And if Peter had given them a lengthy dissertation he would have said, "It's not a question of doing. It's a question of repenting for the remission of sins." And then the Phillipian jailer, when the apostle and those who were with him in prison late at night were singing the hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the God of Israel and to their God who receives on the basis of grace through his mercy. When the earthquake came and the prison doors were thrown open and they remained in. The jailer came in trembling and fell down before Paul because his life had been at stake if they had escaped. And he said, "What shall I do that I might be saved?" And Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Now, you can see where Paul got his teaching. He got his teaching from the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The answer that men give today is of the same kind that men thought were the proper answers then. When we have a question like, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" the priest today answers, "What you need to do is to observe the rights and ceremonies of the church." And so we are told that we need to be baptized in order to be saved. We are told that we must sit at the Lord's Table. And also other churches have other sacraments that we are to observe. And so through the sacramental system we are able to come to an assurance that we have life at least for the moment but never eternally, until we leave this life and work out our salvation after our death.

Those who are thinkers say, "Well, it's obvious that religion is not going to save us but culture and education will, and surely God will accept those that are cultured and those that are educated. The Scriptures make it plain that that is not true. One only immediately has to think of Nicodemus, one of the most cultured and one of the most educated men of his day. And Jesus spoke to him and said, "Nicodemus, you don't have it. You must be born again." And then there are those who say, who are simply moralists, "It's just a matter of doing good works."

I don't remember whether I made reference to this or not. But about eight days ago two young men appeared at my door on Saturday morning and knocked on the door. And as I walked to the door I could see. And when I opened the door I said, "Well, good morning. What can I do for you?" I had an inkling of who they might be but not precisely. They just looked like men who would engage in a little religious conversation. And so they said, "Good morning, sir," very nicely and then launched into their programmed approach. They said, "We wonder if you've ever thought of the kingdom?" [Laughter] I said, "Well, I've given that a thought or two." [Laughter] That is the same morning I had the conversation -- the interview with the young Southern Baptist minister in the city that I referred to last Sunday. And he arrived just at the same time, because they arrived at ten o'clock and he was standing about fifteen feet away. And I could look at him. They didn't see him and I just noticed that he was really enjoying this conversation. [Laughter] And I thought, "Well, it'd be nice when I got through if they could then go to him. [Laughter] So anyway, we were engaged in a little conversation about the kingdom for a moment. They asked me what I thought about the kingdom and I said a few things to them about my ideas concerning the kingdom. But then I said, "But I'm very interested in this: how do we get to heaven." And that seemed to throw them back a bit because they hadn't anticipated that someone would say anything like that. And I'm sure that deep down they were thinking, "Why didn't they tell us that that kind of question we might have." [Laughter] Because you'll notice that these people who knock on your doors, as general rule they are programmed zombies. That is, they have answers to certain questions and they have certain texts of Scripture but they cannot find other texts of Scripture. And they are unable totally to reason from the word of

God and to draw out other passages of Scripture to support what they are saying.

So they replied after they were taken aback a bit. "Well, we must do good works." And I said, "That's an interesting thing in the light of what the apostle says. He says for by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. But you're saying that salvation is of works. It would appear that you're in contradiction with the Apostle Paul."

And then they said, "But Paul said faith without works is dead." I said, "No, that was James." [Laughter] James says, "Faith without works is dead." Now, all of this went on. It went on for about fifteen minutes to twenty minutes but it was obvious every statement I made there was no response. It was just like -- I don't know if this come on, but I better not walk to far back. But it was just as if I was speaking here. "For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast. What do you think of that?" [Laughter] That's the kind of response you're getting. [Laughter] They are really zombies. They are really programmed zombies. Now, unfortunately that is true. And I dare say that you who are Christians in the audience who have had occasion to talk to with people of this time will find that that is exactly so. They have been taught a few little texts of Scripture which are supposed to support their particular doctrines. But if you get off of that beaten track they were unable even to find any texts in the Bible. If I mentioned a passage they couldn't find it in their Bible. I had to take their Bible from their hands and find it for them. But they had the basic concept that salvation is by what we do.

And so I tried to explain as best I could that when James says, "Faith without works is dead he said that works is the sign or the evidence of a true faith." And it is true. The man who truly believes will produce good works, but it is the faith that saves. Not the good works, unless we want to have the texts of Scripture in opposition with one another.

Well, I was happy that at the end I had programmed them a little bit because as they left I said, "Now, how is it then that we are saved?" And unwillingly but nevertheless I had to say it, "Well, faith is that which saves but good works is the evidence of faith." And so with that they left

somewhat programmed. I invited them back to come and let's talk further about it but I've not heard from them since. [Laughter] And I'm not holding my breath until they do return. [Laughter] But it just may be in God's grace and providence that down the street, for there are other Christians on our street, that they might run into someone who will be another step along the way to the finding of eternal life because that's the way I came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Quite a few people had to speak to me when I was just like these long men, totally blind to anything spiritual, being uninterested in it all.

Well, Jesus' answer to the question, "What shall I do that I might work the works of God?" is to deny that there is any salvation by that kind of work. You'll notice he uses the singular. "This is the work of God that ye believe on him who He has sent." In what sense could it be said that faith is a work? Now, I think that the ideal back of our Lord's words is that faith is not a work in the sense in which men speak of work. When men speak of work as something that they do physically in order to gain approval with God Jesus denies that. For he says all through this passage that life is a gift of God. So it is not anything that we earn. In what sense then is faith a work? Well, only in the sense that it is an activity of men. God doesn't believe. We believe. But this faith is something educed by the Holy Spirit. It is he who brings us to the exercise of faith. It is an inward activity, an inward act of the individual, in response to the objective revelation of the word of God. In that sense faith alone, or in that sense alone, faith is a work. "This is the work of God namely that you believe on him whom he hath sent."

Now, to show you that faith itself is not a work in the normal since let's turn over to Romans chapter 4 and verse 5. And notice that the apostle opposes faith is work in the sense of works that merit salvation. The apostle in Romans chapter 4 says,

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father has pertaining to the flesh hath found, for if Abraham were justified by works he hath something of which to glory but not before God. From what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt."

Now, the fifth verse of Romans 4 is the text that shows that faith is not a work in the sense of a work by which we gain merit before God. Because he says, "But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness." Now, if faith were a work he couldn't say, "Now, to him that worketh not but worketh." So it is clear that the apostle regards faith as that which is not a work. It is not a work by which we gain merit before God. "To him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly his faith is counted for righteousness." So when the Lord Jesus replies, "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent," he means that this is no work like the works by which we gain merit before God like the works of the Mosaic Law. But it is an inward activity that men engaged in prompted by the efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit by which we rely upon the work of someone else in order to be saved.

By they way, that text is a remarkable testimony to the deity of Christ. Can you imagine if someone were to go to David and say, "What must we do that we might work the work of God?" David replying, "This is the work God that ye believe on me whom God has sent." You couldn't imagine David saying that. You couldn't imagine Elijah saying that. You couldn't imagine John the Baptist saying that. But Jesus said, "This is the work of God that ye believe on me whom He hath sent." An implicit claim for deity.

So faith is faith in someone else, not faith in ourselves. When we do good works in order to be saved, as many think they are doing, their faith is really in themselves. But Jesus said true faith is to believe in him of whom the Father has sent. This is the germ of the teaching of the apostle Paul which he developed so fully and expresses it so beautifully in the statement, "For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift God, not of works lest anyone should boast."

Do you know why a man cannot get to heaven by his good works? It's too late. It's too late.

He's already sinned. He's already come under divine judgment. If it were possible for you on this morning to say as a result of our meeting, "Well, I'm going out and I'm going to do good works in order to be saved to prove Dr. Johnson is wrong." And if you were to live the remainder of your life in perfection -- absolute perfection. Think of it. Every thought, every deed in harmony with, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul" Would you like to try that? That's bondage. True bondage. But anyway, let's suppose ideally that you accomplished it. When the time came for the assessment of your life that would come to you would be, "What about your life before you made that resolution?" You've already broken the law of God. You already stand under divine condemnation. You're lost. Every one of you in this auditorium standing on your own merits is lost, absolutely lost headed for a Christ-less eternity. That's your condition before God. But Jesus spoke to those men who were blinded, and dull and indifferent to spiritual things. "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom He has sent."

Faith is a work but it's an inward activity produced by God the Holy Spirit. And you can tell from this that it is faith not works that please God. You can also tell that faith is the parent of good works. You can also tell that faith secures life for hear in this passage he says in verse 32 and 33, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven but my father giveth you the true bread from heaven for the bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." Giveth life.

So to sum up our Lord's words: we work for the gift with a work that is not a work. Let me say it again. We work for the gift with a work that is not a work. Our Lord has spoken in wonderfully paradoxical language to say it is not works. It is work but it is work that is a gift and it is by that that we receive as a benefit everlasting life. Now, that is not only taught here. That is taught in other places in the Bible.

In the Old Testament in Isaiah chapter 55 and verse 1 the prophet writes, and notice his words, "How everyone that thirsteth that come ye to the waters and he that hath no money come buy and eat." So the person who has no money is to come buy and eat. "Ye come buy wine and milk

without money and without price." The same kind of paradoxical statement by which he informs his readers it's not a matter of buying something really. It's a matter of buying something without money and without price. It's to come and to receive. That's what our Lord would like to say.

Now, the third dialogue is very simple. He talks about two types of bread. He turns to the nature of the gift that we work for. And so he writes, or John writes in verse 30, "They said, 'What signs showest thou then that we may see and believe thee? What does thou work? After all,'" they said, "'Moses in the Old Testament performed some miracles and therefore we knew that God was with him. But what about you? What sign showest thou that we may see and believe thee? What does thou work? Our fathers at manna in the desert. As it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to it.'"

Now, mind you these individuals have just seen the feeding of the five thousand. They didn't see him walking on the water but they saw him feed five thousand with five loaves and a couple of little fishes. They had seen one of the marvels of all of human history and yet they say, "What sign are you going to show us which will indicate to us that you are really the Messiah?" having just seen the fifteen thousand. You see, they're really zombies too.

Our Lord has performed this mighty miracle. He's given them these magnificent words of counsel and they still are asking that they might see something. And so he answers, "Look, it was not Moses who gave you that gift. It was my father in heaven. He gave the gift of the manna. Moses was just one of his little agents down here on the earth. My father gave you the true bread from heaven." And then he identifies the bread. He says, "The bread of God is who cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world." So he corrects their ideas for they it with Moses. He said, "No, it's something given by God." And then he elaborates and says, "Look, I am the manna. All that Moses did was something that pointed forward to me. And when he fed the children of Israel day after day with the manna from heaven he was just suggesting as plainly as you could suggest that it is God who sustains our life truly for man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth God, and Jesus Christ is the bread of God who has come down from heaven to give life

to the world.”

Now, when he says that he is giving life to the world that's to be understood in the light of the context. What has he been talking about? About Moses. About the children of Israel. He's talking to Israel. And of course, they thought of life as something that pertained to them. And Jesus, just as he so often does in the Gospel of John, reminds them that the life that he has is not simply for Jews. It is for Gentiles as well. So when he says, "Gives life to the world it's obvious he's not thinking of universal atonement. If it were true that he gives life to the world everybody would be saved, but everybody is not saved. He doesn't mean everybody without exception when he uses the term world, but he means everybody without distinction; Jew or Gentile may receive the gift of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. And that includes Texans too. It includes southerners and Yankees. It includes Americans. It includes South Americans. He gives life to the world.

You'll notice Jesus really doesn't answer that last question because that's a question that is unanswered simply because it's unanswerable. What does thou work? He's already worked sign after sign after sign to demonstrate his might power and authority. But if we are not responsive to the light that we have there is no further work that Jesus can do. He gave his word to Herod and finally when Herod asked him for further information the Lord Jesus didn't reach into his pocket and pull out the four spiritual laws and say, "Look, what a beautiful opportunity I'm given." [Laughter] As matter of fact, he kept quiet. He didn't say a single word. He just was silent. I don't know of any teacher of personal evangelism alive today if he didn't know about that incident would say you just need to be silent and say nothing.

We'd tend to think that was a great opportunity but it's not a great opportunity when men have not responded over and over again and have come to be victims of the judgment of God because of constant refusal to respond to the light. It's possible to come into an audience like this and hear the message of the word of God Sunday after Sunday and finally become so hardened to spiritual truth that you can go out of this auditorium without any response to the things of the word of God.

How do we trust the atonement of Christ? We trust the atonement by pleading the atonement with the Lord God. How do we exercise faith in Christ as the bread of life? We exercise faith in Christ as the bread of life by asking for the gift of the bread of life. To ask is to receive. To believe is to receive. To ask is the response of a fundamental faith. And so when an individual says, "Lord, I thank Thee for the word of God which says that Jesus Christ is the bread of life. I want the bread of life." That's the exercise of the faith that saves in the petition directed toward the Lord God on the basis of the atoning work of Christ. We trust Christ by pleading the atonement of Christ, our trust, our hope for time and for eternity.

What do we gain? Well the meat that endureth, Jesus says. The bread of God, life-sufficient for all of life's problems, sufficient for all of life's blows, sufficient for eternal salvation. I wish it were possible to develop these things, but we'll do that as we go along in the Gospel of John.

If you're here this morning and you've never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ may God help you to recognize your lost condition and come to him and plead the atonement by asking for the forgiveness of sins through that which Christ has done.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent words of the Lord Jesus Christ so true to our condition. And Father, if there are some in this audience who have never come to Christ, Lord, through the word of God may there be right at this moment a transaction between them and the Lord in which they say thank...

[RECORDING ENDED ABRUPTLY]