



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 16:12–15, 1 Corinthians 2:13–3:4

“The Spirit and Believers: His Teaching Ministry”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading this morning is John chapter 16 verse 12 through verse 15, and we are as you know those of you who have been following along in the study of the Gospel of John the Upper Room Discourse, and in the Upper Room Discourse the Lord Jesus is preparing the apostles for the time when he would not be present with them. He has just said that they will find that the world is hostile to believers, and then he has also said that he is going away and he is going away for the necessary reason that if he does not go away the Holy Spirit will not come to indwell them, but when he comes he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment. And last week we sought to show from our Lord’s words that the Holy Spirit would convince the world of sin of the facts about sin, of the facts about righteousness, and of the facts about judgment through the believers, through the apostles and through the successes of the apostles.

Well that raises the question of course and the question is how is it that the apostles and how is it that other believers are going to be the instrumentalities of the Holy Spirit? Do we not need something else? And so in this section the Lord Jesus relates the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit to this program that he has just outlined.

Now in verse 12 he says,

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

(Let me make one comment regarding the text here, well two. When we read here, “he will guide you into all truth.” I’m reading from the Authorized Version, and there is good manuscript authority for the word “in” instead of “into.” Now if the Lord said, “He will guide you in all truth.” He means that within the whole sphere of truth the Holy Spirit would be a guide for us. He’s not suggesting that he was going to give us an understating of all the truth now, or even the apostles an understanding of all the truth then, but he is going to guide them in the sphere of all the truth giving them the necessary truth. There is a good bit of manuscript authority for the preposition “into.” The difference in Greek is the difference between *ἐν* [*en*] and *εἰς* [*eis*]. So there is a very minor difference and if “into” is what our Lord said, then the reference is to a penetration of all aspects of the truth. “He will guide you into all the truth.” Not that they will understand everything, but that they will have an understanding of the breadth of truth. It’s difficult to be absolutely certain of the reading at this point, that is what our Lord said, because the manuscripts differ a bit here, but I think just for after all people do come and say, “Well what do you think?” Well I think that probably our Lord said, “He will guide you in all the truth.” One other thing, he says, “For he shall not speak of himself.” That “οἱ” is used in the sense of from. He will not speak from himself. In other words he will not speak on his own authority is the idea as it is rendered in some of the versions. Verse 14.)

“He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

There is one other passage that I would like to read, and I am going to ask you if you will to turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 2. And I’d like to read verse 13 and 14 of 1 Corinthians 2

through chapter and verse 3 or perhaps 4. 1 Corinthians 2:13. The apostle is speaking about the wisdom of God and he says, verse 13,

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (Frankly and directly what Paul is saying is that the man who is not a Christian man cannot understand that Bible. The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. They are spiritually understood. That's why the Bible seems to be such a closed book to so many people. Verse 15,) But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? (Paul cites from the Old Testament there.) but we have the mind of Christ. (He speaks about mature believers, but what about those people who are Christians but they are not mature believers? Well Paul says,) And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. (From this we learn of course that 1 Corinthians is not meat, but milk. for they are not able to bear meat. Ah, somebody said, well 1 Corinthians, there's some things in there that are rather deep aren't they? Yes, perhaps, but Paul classifies them as milk. Now he explains why.) For ye are yet carnal: (Verse 3) for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? (In other words one can hardly tell the difference between you and the world. For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; (that was there particular form of carnality, divisions, strife.) are ye not carnal?” Paul says.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word? Let's bow together for a time of prayer.

[Prayer] We thank Thee Lord for the privilege of the reading of Thy word, and we thank Thee for the gift of the Holy Spirit who has now come as a gift from the Lord Jesus to the church of Jesus Christ to guide us into the truth. We are so thankful Lord for the privilege of the study of the word of God for the privilege of having the word of God in our hands and for the privilege of pondering it under the teaching ministry of the supreme teacher of the word, the Holy Spirit.

And we thank Thee for the way in which in the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ as we listen to him in the unfolding of the word of God, and we thank Thee Lord for all of the blessings of life that come to us through Christ, our salvation for that Lord we give Thee thanks for the blood that was shed on Calvary’s cross for the ministries that flow out of that we are indeed grateful for now and for eternity. Thou hast been so wonderfully gracious to us when in loving kindness and mercy in delivering us from our sin and guilt and condemnation causing our feet to be set upon the solid rock establishing our goings. We give Thee thanks and praise.

And we thank Thee Lord for the privilege of the ministry of the word of God and we pray that Thy hand of blessing may be upon all of the preaching and teaching and the writing and the other forms of ministry that go forth from this local assembly of believers. Bless the elders and the deacons. Guide and direct them in their meditations and counsels. And may their ministry to us be helpful and fruitful. We thank Thee Lord for all of the ways in which Thou hast surrounded us with divine providence and we thank Thee for the care that Thou doest exercise over us.

We know Lord as a result of the great fall of man in the Garden of Eden that we are set for sufferings and trials. And we pray Lord for those who are experiencing them. We pray particularly for those who are in our Calendar of Concern, who are ill and sick, some very ill, we commit them to Thee. We pray O God Thy hand of blessing upon them spiritually first of all, physically and give healing Lord as it may please Thee and sustain those who minister to them and supply the needs that exist. We commit them to Thee. We know that Thou art sufficient for all of our needs and we pray Lord that Thou wilt be sufficient for those who are passing through times of trial.

And for those who are perplexed, puzzled, disturbed, despairing, discouraged in their Christian lives, for those who have difficult decisions that seem to be beyond their capacity to resolve, we commit all of these problems to Thee. We pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ today, and for our country and President hand for others associated with them and with a local authorities and government. O God may Thy hand be upon this country for ultimate spiritual good for many people and now be with us in this meeting as we sing as we hear the word. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for this morning and the exposition of the word of God is “The Spirit and Believers: His Teaching Ministry.” A very common and down to earth question among spiritually interested people finds its answer here. The question is how can I understand the Bible? Many people find it difficult to understand the Scriptures so they affirm. Frequently I am asked the question what can I do to help me understand the Scriptures? Our Lord gives really the essential answer here in the words that he spoke first of all the eleven apostles. And the answer is simply this, through the teaching ministry of Christ, through the Spirit.

Many years ago I had this impressed upon my mind when I first went to theological seminary. In the theological seminary Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer was conducting chapel. He was the president and founder of Dallas Seminary, and in the chapel services in those days there were ten or twelve men who were the faculty and they always sat on the front behind the pulpit in a long line of chairs just as if we were to put ten or twelve chairs here next to each other. And the students would sit in the audience and the faculty here and Dr. Chafer would ordinarily conduct chapel leading the singing, for he was essentially a music man and then introducing the speaker for the day.

Well it was customary for Dr. Chafer when seminary began in September to give four messages on the spiritual life. These messages were given every year. I heard them for nine straight years, all four of them, and enjoyed them every time. They were excellent messages, and for many years he had done that. The first sentence that he gave in the first of the messages on Tuesday

morning at 10:00, for chapel used to be held from 10:00 and following. He would say to the new students, and to the old ones who had come back, “At Dallas Theological Seminary we have a faculty of one.” Well since there were ten or twelve men sitting on the platform that seemed a rather startling thing for him to say, and I can still remember him saying it. “At Dallas Theological Seminary we have a faculty of one.” And then he would turn primarily to these passages that I have read for the Scripture reading this morning, and he sought to show that ultimately the teacher of spiritual truth is the Holy Spirit and ultimately our responsiveness to the ministry of the Spirit determined our growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well that of course is what our Lord is essentially trying to stress here, and that is that the Holy Spirit is going to be the teacher of the apostles, and he will guide them into the truth and through his guiding of them into the truth they will be aided in their work of convincing the world of the facts about sin, of the facts about righteousness, and of the facts about judgment. As we know from the study of Bible the Lord Jesus Christ’s work is both finished and unfinished. Christians, who’ve been Christians for some time, like to speak about the finished work of Christ, and by that they mean to distinguish Christianity from every other system of truth. For every other system of truth is a system of truth built around what we must keep on doing. Whereas Christianity grounded in the fact that Christ has done something upon which we can rest for time and for eternity. That is he has given his life as an atonement for sin. And when we have by the grace of God been brought to faith in Christ we have the forgiveness of sins because he has finished the work. There isn’t anything for us to do to complete his work. It is a completed work. His finished work is his atoning work. It’s sometimes overlooked that the Lord also has unfinished work as well.

Now this unfinished work is not related to our eternal redemption in the sense that we cannot have assurance now of the fact that we have the forgiveness of sins. But Jesus Christ is engaged in work, which will be ultimately the completion of the program of God. For example he still must come again the second time. That is an unfinished aspect of his work. He also is our great high priest, and he constantly prays for the saints of God. That is his unfinished work too. He is our

advocate and when we sin he advocates for us with the Father. That's part of his unfinished work. And then he also teaches through the Holy Spirit. That is part of his unfinished work, so what we are looking at here now is part of our Lord's unfinished work. And this he does through an agent. The agent is the Holy Spirit.

Now before we look at these short verses let me remind you of the context. The disciples need instruction in order that they may be useful to the Spirit as he through them convinces the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. And so Christ through the Spirit will instruct them and bring them to spiritual maturity that they may effectively glorify him in the society in which he has placed them. The world hates them, and they are through the Holy Spirit to witness to the world. They need the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit to do this effectively. They need to be brought into the truth, to know the truth, so that they may effectively be the agents of the Lord in this convincing work.

Now we read in verse 12 of chapter 16 of a limitation that they have at the present time. That is from the standpoint of the upper room. Jesus said to them, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” So he turns from his work with reference to the world to his work with reference to believers, and says that he has many things to say to them but unfortunately they are unable to bear them now. What are these many things? Well of course if there are many things we might begin to detail them and go through the rest of the New Testament and pick out individual things that he wanted to say to them but he was unable to do it because of their limitations. But to sum it all up what our Lord is speaking about here is a kind of pre-authentication of the remainder of the New Testament.

Now of course we have had a reference in chapter 14 in verse 26 to the facts that are recorded in the gospels. Jesus there said, “But the comforter which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.” Now that of course would be a reminder of the things that he had said when he was here upon the earth. In other words the Spirit would remind them of the content

of the gospels, but the Lord Jesus is saying something else here. He is talking about things he cannot say to them now. He has already said the things that are found in the gospels to them, so this is something different. He says, “There are things that I would like to say unto you, but you are unable to bear them now.”

We can only gather from the fact that he said this in the upper room to the apostles that this is a reference to the rest of what we have in the New Testament now. In other words the many things are, and this statement I have many things to say to you is a kind of pre authentication of reminder of the New Testament. In other words, there is prepositional revelation, not naked, unexplained events, but positional revelation facts that can be put in sentences that the Lord Jesus desires to give to them. But he cannot do it right now because they are not yet prepared for it.

Now before we go on to speak about why they cannot bear it. I'd like for you to notice something about this statement, “I have yet many things to say unto you.” There are people who like to say essentially Christianity is what Christ said and did. Now in one sense what Christ did is fundamental to Christianity, but usually when that sentence is made it's something like this, “What Christ taught when he was here on the earth is the essential thing in Christianity. What the apostles said is secondary to what Christ said when he was here. And usually associated with that is an interpretation of what Christ said that eliminates any reference to his atoning work in blood through substitutionary penal sacrifice on the cross at Calvary. It's a little way by which many of our modern scholars seek to extricate Christianity from its fundamental foundation in the blood of the cross on Calvary so that Christianity becomes a system of ethics, and the way in which they do this is to say, “We need to go back to words of Jesus.”

In fact that used to be the cry of many modern scholars and still some of them are repeating the same thing. Interest in the historical Jesus, important in itself is made the preeminent thing, so back to Jesus. Dispense with Paul. Dispense with other apostolic teaching. Go back to Jesus. Our Lord's words are a clear refutation of that. He said, “I have many things to say unto you.” Things that he has said do not give a complete revelation of what Jesus wished to say. In fact I think we can

put it this way. There is no true loyalty to Jesus Christ if we confine our attention to what he said and did here on the earth. We are most loyal to Jesus Christ when we are also most receptive to the teaching of the apostles, for it is he who has authenticated their sayings, and in fact later on as the New Testament makes very plain the apostles claim that they are giving us the teaching of the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

Now it seems to me then when a person says, “Let us go back to Jesus.” He is actually fighting our Lord Jesus in so doing. We are most loyal to Christ when we pay attention to the importance he attached to the revelation that he would give. Now he says, “You cannot bear them now.” Why? This word bear is an interesting work. It is the word that is used later on for the physical carrying of his cross. But obviously here it is not a reference to a physical bearing. It probably is a reference not so much to mental or moral unfitness, for these individuals were intelligent men natively. That’s evident from what they produced. Furthermore they were moral men. They were men of high principle generally speaking. It must be a reference to their spiritual incapacity. What he has been saying all along. They do not yet have the Holy Spirit permanently indwelling them. Remember the Apostle John has said in chapter 7 after Jesus spoke about the ministry of the Spirit. He said, “The Spirit has not yet been given because that Jesus has not been glorified.” And in the 14th chapter in the 17th verse, Jesus has said, “Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.” So the reason that they cannot bear those things yet is because they do not have the permanent universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

There is something that must transpire to complete Christianity on the Day of Pentecost, and the idea that the individuals of the Old Testament have every facility for the understanding of the truth of Jesus Christ is denied by our Lord Jesus Christ here. He said, “It’s expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away the Holy Spirit will not come to you. But if I go away he will come. And he will convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment through you, and he will teach you and guide you in all truth.” So our Lord’s teaching is not complete. They are not yet able

to grasp all that they will be able to grasp when the Holy Spirit has come. That seems to be the force of verse 12.

Now in verse 13 he goes on to speak more directly of what the Spirit will give in instruction. He says, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth.” Now I think we should stop for just a moment, and say a word about, “Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth.” Greek has an unusual kind of use of gender. Now we generally speaking in English speak of, we generally use natural gender. That is if something is female, we will use the pronoun she. If something is male we sill say he. Now we do have some exceptions to it. We will look at a ship and we will say, “She is a very pretty ship.” Now there are some ways in which we take a neuter noun naturally and give it a feminine pronoun or use a feminine pronoun to refer to it. In Greek however grammatical gender is used. For example if a noun is masculine pronouns will always be masculine. If they refer to it whether the thing itself is masculine or feminine or neuter. And if the thing is a feminine noun, then the pronouns that agree with it will be feminine even though the things itself may be a neuter object or masculine or feminine.

Now it so happens that the term Spirit in Greek is neuter, so the pronouns would ordinarily in agreement be neuter in form. Now whether the Spirit is masculine or feminine that’s determined by the context. It is grammatically neuter, but here the Lord Jesus says, “when he” and uses the masculine pronoun, the masculine demonstrative pronoun. “Howbeit when he,” and then in apposition, “the Spirit of truth.” “He, (masculine,) the Spirit (neuter) of truth.” It doesn't prove that the Spirit is a person, but nevertheless it is evidence and I think some fairly strong evidence of that fact. Other things make it plain that the Spirit is a person. We are not trying to debate the question of whether the Spirit is a masculine or feminine person. So far as the text of Scripture is concerned the masculine pronouns are used, but that’s not the point. The fact that the Spirit is a person is the thing that I want to stress. So, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth.” The Spirit is not an influence. The Spirit is not a power, though he is both of those. He is more than that. He is s person. He’s the third person of the Trinity.

Now notice how he is described. He is called the Spirit of truth, and back in church 14 verse 17 the text I read just a moment ago, he was called the Spirit of truth there. Now that’s important because that stresses the fact that the Holy Spirit is one who always acts according to truth and that of course is a way in which we ought to act, always in accordance with truth. No spiritual thing is ever to be relied upon if it is not true. We may say we’ve had an experience of this or we felt this, but if it is not true that is in accordance with the revelation of God it’s something to be avoided. In other words every experience that we have as Christians would be an experience, which is wedded to the words of the Bible, to the truth of the Bible. If we have an experience that the Scriptures speak contrary to our experience has been misinterpreted. Often people will say, “I had a vision of this, or I had a feeling about this.” And it will be something that some text of Scripture contradicts. Well then the feeling may be a feeling that they’ve had, but they’ve put a wrong interpretation upon it.

It’s rather interesting to me that just about two weeks ago in one of our Dallas papers there is a citation from a man who is a pastor of a very large church not too far from this church. And this man made in a particular speech that he made before a large group of preachers, he is said according to the paper to have made this comment, and I am going to read exactly what the newspaper has in order that I may not misquote the newspaper. Now this is what the newspaper said, that Dr. So and So told sixteen thousands Baptists attending the meeting, that love for one another must come before orthodoxy of belief. Love must come before orthodoxy of belief.

Now it would take only the simplest Christian to know that orthodoxy of belief must come before love, and that there can be no true biblical love if it is not orthodox or in accordance with Scripture. The kind of love that evidently he’s speaking about is pure sentimentality if it does not harmonize with the word of God. Now he goes on to say and I don’t understand how an intelligent man and he is an intelligent man, could say this. In fact having had some experience with misquotation myself it’s possible this is a misquotation, but it is put in quotes in the article. The preacher goes on to say, “I don’t know a preacher that does not believe that every single word of the Bible is the word of God.” That’s an amazing statement in the light of the fact that there are

probably only a minority of preachers who believe that to start with. But at any rate the point I want to make is the Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and Jesus emphasizes that fact. Orthodoxy of belief always comes before love.

Now love is important, but Paul says that we should love in the truth. And if our love is not within the sphere of truth it is not Christian love. Now Christian love is important, extremely important. And it is possible for us to have a great knowledge of truth and to have no or very little Christian love, but love must be in the truth, just as we should speak the truth in love. So the Lord Jesus says, “When the Spirit of truth is come he will guide you in all truth.” What does that suggest to you? Well that suggests this to me, first that his teaching is a gradual teaching. In other words he doesn't unload everything up us at the very beginning. We are expected to grow from children to adulthood, and we shouldn't stay children, but we do grow. We don't begin mathematics by teaching our little children the binomial theorem. Or we don't begin with computers by teaching them binary math. I still puzzle over that, but we don't begin there.

Now that's an important thing if we are going to understand a computer and how it operates, but what the Lord is suggesting by the term guide is that it is proper for us to begin with the milk of the word, but we should go on to the meat of the word, and if you stay in the milk of the word, well it's like a retarded person spiritually. Now the second thing this work suggests is that there should be a response. When we are guided in truth one gains the picture of an individual who holds the hand of someone else, who is guiding them along and there is responsiveness. He doesn't say, “I will bring you into the truth.” There is a sense in which that could be said of course, but he stresses the fact that it is a gradual thing to which we should give response, and he also suggests it seems to me that this guidance is never ended as long as the Spirit is teaching. In other words he didn't just teach in the earlier centuries of the Christian era, but he's still teaching. And therefore we should still be expecting to find some new things in the word of God.

John Robinson the pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers said, “I am verily persuaded that the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word.” I think those words are just as true today as

they were when John Robinson spoke them centuries ago. The Lord is still teaching and we may expect to gain new understanding of the word of God as we apply ourselves to the Scriptures, and listen to the Spirit's teaching. In fact John Dunkin who taught at the University of Edinburgh in the Old Testament some years ago used to resent the habit that Christians had of talking about the earliest Christian writers outside the canon as being the fathers of the church because he liked to point out that the characteristic of the teaching of the fathers of the church who taught in the first few centuries is rudimentary or elementary teaching and that we are the beneficiaries of the Holy Spirit's teaching down through the centuries, and therefore we ought to be called the fathers and they ought to be called the children. There is a sense that that is true. We should expect of course to keep learning from the word of God. That is why, though we have creeds and some creeds are very good that, that creeds are never the full encompassing of the truth of God.

The Westminster Confession is a great confession and has a great approach to Christian truth in it, essentially a correct approach to Christianity, but it was written hundreds of years ago, and therefore the Holy Spirit's teaching has continued through the years, and there are things that we may say that are true that are not necessarily found in that confession of faith as Abraham Kuyper, one of the greatest of the theologians who believed in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Canons of the Synod of Dort said, “The only thing wrong with the making of creeds is that we don't keep making them.” In other words we should keep making creeds. Therefore what our Lord is saying is that we may expect the Holy Spirit to be continuing his teaching of the word of God. And that by the way goes for all statements of faith. They're always inadequate after a period of time. That should be a great encouragement to the study of the Scriptures. It may be that you through the study of Scripture will come to something that is of significance for the whole church of Jesus Christ.

Well the Lord says, “He will guide you in all the truth for,” he explains, “He shall not speak from himself. In other words the Holy Spirit will not speak on his own authority. He is going to speak from me. He shall not speak from himself or on his own authority, but whatsoever he shall

hear that shall he speak. He will be an infallible guide since he teaches from Jesus Christ, and he will not teach on his own authority. Of course the Spirit as the third person of the Trinity, if he did speak on his own authority would be speaking truth, but the idea is impossible cannot be true because the persons of the Trinity work in conjunction and in harmony and in unity with one another. So he will take of the things of Christ and Epaphras will show them unto us. We learn two important points here that truth is not by man's discovery, but by divine revelation. “He shall take of the things of Christ and he shall show them unto you.” We don't discover truth. Truth is revealed to us, and when we have the Bible as the revelation of God before us, we gain understanding of it through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Now he may use secondary tools like principles of interpretation, but the ultimate teacher is the third person of the Trinity as he gives us things that Christ desires that we know. That emphasizes of course the fact that we must rely on the Holy Spirit, not upon the brilliance of our intellects. Not upon our aptitude for theoretical teaching, not upon aptitude for practical teaching, not upon our personal appeal, not upon the degrees that we may have earned from theological institutions, not upon the language skills that we may have, but ultimately upon submission to the Holy Spirit's instruction.

Sometimes people gain the impression that if you don't know something about Greek and Hebrew you cannot understand the Bible. Unfortunately that impression has been created by a lot of people who know a little bit of Hebrew and little bit of Greek. But they need to do is to know just a little bit more about Hebrew and a little bit more about Greek and then they wouldn't be so dogmatic. As a matter of fact let me say this. It isn't necessary at all to know Greek or Hebrew to be a deep student of the word of God.

I had a friend come to me with his wife who was a young Christian. He had grown up in a church of which I had been pastor some years ago. And he had become somewhat jaded to biblical teaching, like so many of us do having heard a lot of biblical teaching. Well his wife was a new fresh Christian, and she was all excited. And he came to me and he was in another city now listening to a

man who used Greek and Hebrew in almost every sentence of his message. And he said one thing bothers me. He so changes the text by reference to the original languages Greek and Hebrew that I wonder if I can ever get anything from the Bible on my own because I don't know the languages myself.

Now that's a pitiful situation to create. He said I read only a little of the Bible now because I have no confidence whatsoever in my ability to understand the Bible. Well we didn't have a lengthy time of course, but it's essential to make this point, and the point I tried to make with him was that the meaning of words is ultimately dependent upon usage in their contexts. Therefore if one were to take several versions of the Bible such as the American Standard Version or the Revised Standard Version or even a Phillips or a Weymouth or the New International Version, and really study the context of the particular passage you are interested in then you would have two things. You would have first of all the different possibilities of meaning derived from the interpretations put upon the passage in these versions, and secondly you would ultimately come to the genuine meaning of the passage because it would be derived from a serious study of the context.

You can always eliminate the other interpretations by looking at the context. That's the first rule of biblical interpretation, and the one most usually violated even by experienced students of the Bible. In other words, it's not essential for a deep understanding the word to know the original languages. They may throw some help on points here and there, but it's not necessary. And what was interesting to me was that the wife then commented. I wrote down a word. She said, “He's not been attending the Bible classes where,” and she mentions the name of the pastor, “Where he explains many of the features of the piel and hiphil stems.”

Now those of you who are theological students will recognize that these are stems of Hebrew words, piel and hiphil stems. Now [she] doesn't know anything about that, but she's been listening you see. Says, “He doesn't pay attention. He's been talking about the piel and hiphil stems and the tenses of the Greek verbs and the conditional sentences and he doesn't take notes as he ought to and that's why he's not learning.”

I thought that was so revealing that here is a person who is just a brand new Christian, and is really just sopping up the word of God and growing in grace and here's a fellow that's been listening to teachers for years, and he is actually behind her in the understating of Scripture. You see if you have interest, and you are willing to ponder the word of God, God will guide you into the truth.

Now he says he will show things to come. Now that could be understood to mean prophetic teaching. In other words he will show you things to come from the standpoint of the Apostle John's time when he wrote this. It seems to me it's more likely that our Lord was speaking of the time of the upper room, and therefore, “He will show you things to come,” is a reference not simply to the contents of the prophetic word, the things that have to do with the future from our standpoint, but things that were future from the Upper Room Discourse. In other words the things found in the Book of Acts and in the epistles of the apostles themselves.

They were things to come from the standpoint of the time of the upper room. That of course means that what the apostles wrote about the cross of Christ, the resurrection the sense of the cross, the meaning of the resurrection those were things about which the Lord was speaking. They had been puzzled and baffled by the fact that Jesus said he was going to die on the cross, and the apostles then were given instruction in that and in the epistles they expound the meaning of the cross, the meaning of the resurrection, as well as what is going to happen in the future.

Now Jesus explains in the last two verses, and the theme of these verses is the work of the Spirit is Christo-centric In other words the third person of the Trinity does not glorify himself. He does not speak about himself. He does not even speak from himself that is originating from himself. He speaks from Christ. And he glorifies Christ. Jesus says, “He shall glorify me.” Imagine a man saying that, a mere man. “He shall glorify me.” Suppose I were to say to you, “The Spirit is going to come, and he is going to glorify S. Lewis Johnson.”

Now most of you are smiling, some of you are laughing. That's the proper response. That's ridiculous, but when Jesus says it men believe it, even men who are not believers see that it's suitable

and fitting. Something deep down within where they are repressing truth says, it's right. I don't respond to it, but it's right. The Spirit glorifies Christ.

Now let me say this. Any work since the chief work of the Spirit is to glorify Christ, any work, any man, any movement that glorifies self or glorifies the Spirit is false to Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit. And I'd like to say this as well so that the point may be clearly made. Any kind of movement that glorifies the Holy Spirit should have branded upon their tongues, “He shall glorify me.” When we truly preach the word of God we are glorifying Christ, not the Spirit. Glorifying Christ.

Well there is a marvelous little story in Genesis chapter 24 to which I'd to turn, but we don't have time. You remember it's the story of Abraham obtaining a bride for Isaac his son, and there is an unnamed servant, who travels to the East in order to win a bride for Isaac. And so he goes this unnamed servant. Isn't it interesting the Holy Spirit doesn't have a name? He has a title, but not a name. So the unnamed Spirit or the unnamed servant goes to the East and through a series of experiences about a well and the camels, he is led by the Lord God to Rebecca, who is the daughter of Bathuel. Rebecca was the first cousin once removed, as we say down South, first cousin once removed of Isaac, and it so turns out that Rebecca is the one whom the Lord has chosen for Abraham's son's wife. And when they gather around the table that night and they are getting ready to eat the servant of Abraham says, “Look I don't want to eat a thing until I have told you why I am here.” And with that he unfolds the glories of Abraham and the son. He says, “My master is a great man. He's been made great, and further he's given everything that he has into the hands of his son. And I'm here to obtain a bride for the son.”

Well that is exactly what the Holy Spirit does in his work of glorifying Jesus Christ. He glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and through his ministry brings conviction to the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and through that ministry gathers together the people of God into the church of Jesus Christ. I love this fact, but you know Romans chapter 8, has always been called by Bible students, the great chapter on the Holy Spirit because it probably is a chapter which outside of

the Upper Room Discourse contains more on the Spirit and his ministry than any other chapter in the Bible.

Do you know how it begins? “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” Do you know how it ends? Well it ends, “For I am persuaded that neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The great chapter on the Holy Spirit begins with stress on Christ, and concludes with stress on Jesus Christ.

Now the Lord explains that the Spirit is a kind of divine mediator. He says, He shall glorify me for he shall receive from me and shall show it unto you all things that the Father hath of mine, therefore said I that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you. So what’s the process? It’s very simple. The Holy Spirit is one who listens to the Son. And the Son gives teaching to the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit comes to the saints whom he indwells universally and permanently and gives them the things that he has heard from the Lord, and then he goes back and he listens. This of course is very much of a simplification, but this is what he is saying. He will take of mine and show it unto you. So the Holy Spirit is the mediator of the knowledge of God. Isn’t that magnificent, and he indwells all of us permanently, universally, magnificent. I think the repetition of the fact that he reports back. A word used three times here is designed to stress the divine initiative in this undertaking.

Now let me illustrate, as I have to close. Let’s just imagine a person in England who about fifty years ago has heard about this great city in the United States of America and about this great country of the United States of America, and since he’s had some relatives have come over here, he’s wanted to come to. So he gets on a boat and he leaves England and he comes to Charleston, South Carolina. He finds the country magnificent. Well it so happens that he’s come through storms on the sea and when he arrives in Charleston, he praises the captain for his skill in bringing the boat through the storms. He praises the boat because the boat has been able to withstand the storms. He

thanks them for the fellowship that they've had, and he arrives in this country. And then he does not investigate the United States of America at all, but stays in Charleston and about two or three months later goes home.

Well it's nice of course to have come. It's nice to have seen Charleston. But he has failed to see the United States of America, with all of the magnificent beauties and glories of this country. I'd like to suggest to you that that's a picture of many believers. They have come to faith in Jesus Christ. They praise the Lord for the salvation that has come to them. They thank him for the way in which he has brought them through the storms of life to safe harbor. They enjoy the fellowship on the way, but so far as really coming to know the vast land of the salvation that we have in Christ, they've staying in Charleston. Isn't that sad?

Well many of us are like that. Many Christians I know are like that. They thank the Lord for the fact that Christ saved them. They praise him for the blood of the cross. They rejoice that they are saved, that they are going to heaven. But so far as the vastness of the salvation of God and the truth of God they have little comprehension of it and little appreciate it. May God help us to realize that it's not enough to be saved? Salvation is an entrance into the beginning of the knowledge of God. That's the reason we are saved, that we might know him.

So let me summarize. We have a divine teacher whose ministry is to glorify Christ by guiding us into an increasingly richer knowledge of him. That's the answer to the question, “How may I understand the Bible?” From the human standpoint of course we have to deal with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians. Some of us are natural men. We cannot receive the things of the word of God. We need a new birth, which comes through faith in the Savior who died for us. Some of us have been Christians, and we're like Christians who've remained immature for years. We are retarded. We can only take the milk of the word. We cannot grow. We cannot come to an appreciation of the things of the Lord. Some are on your way of course and you are immature simply because you are a recent convert. That's fine. That's to be expected. There are some however who need confession and restoration to health in order that they may grow. I long for the

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day when we shall have in Believers Chapel many, many spiritually mature people, who not only know the Scriptures, but who know the truth of God and have a great measure of appreciation and application of that truth. May God bless us to that end?

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these marvelous words of instruction given by the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit apply them, as our needs exist? For Jesus' sake. Amen.