

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson
Romans 7:7-12
"Is the Law Sinful?"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are studying in our expositions on Sunday mornings the epistle of Paul to the Romans, and we are in chapter 7 and our Scripture reading for this morning is Romans chapter 7, verse 7 through verse 12. Romans chapter 7, verse 7 through verse 12. The apostle writes,

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. (The apostle, incidentally, does not mean that sin does not exist apart from the law. He means that it is inactive, and he uses dead in that sense; a sense that he gives that word in other places in his writings. Verse 9): For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (You can see in this verse the force of the preceding. Sin was there all along.) And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

You can see from that 12th verse which is the conclusion of our Scripture reading that that verse is the answer to the question that is asked in verse 7. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid." The law is holy. The commandment is holy and just and good. It is an expression of the character of God.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer removed from audio.]

[Message] The subject for this morning in the exposition of the word is "Is the Law Sinful?" We have been saying that Romans is Paul's masterpiece on salvation. The apostle, it seems to me, in the theme verse or two of the first chapter makes it quite plain that salvation is the theme which he is expounding in this epistle. He said,

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written the just shall live by faith."

Salvation from the penalty of sin, salvation from the power of sin, salvation from the presence of sin, ultimately, is the theme then that the apostle is developing. Included in this is the great doctrine of justification by faith that act by God by which he declares the believer righteous by virtue of the imputation of the merits of Jesus Christ upon faith. It is something done for us and done for us by a substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. He's

been expounding the doctrine of sanctification also. That's the process by which the believer is brought into likeness to Jesus Christ. It is something that is done primarily in us. It too is possibly because of union with our representative the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we're talking about sanctification, not sanctimonious. We talked about that the apostle does not hold any brief for sanctimoniousness. Sanctification is something else. And finally, the apostle concludes in the 8th chapter, perhaps, the climax of the most doctrinal part of the epistle with the doctrine of glorification. That's the end of the act of justification. And it's the end of the process of sanctification.

Now we're in that part of Romans in which the apostle is showing us how to be saved from the power of sin in our daily lives. Since only Christ can live the Christian life, ultimately, we need him. And Paul's words are designed to show us how we have him. He has spoken of primarily our union with Christ as being the clue to sanctification. He spoke of judicial union in verses 1 through 14 of chapter 6. Then of moral union in verse 15 through verse 23 of chapter 6 reminding us that there has been a definitive change in the life of a believer, and the believer can no longer go on living in sin having believed in Jesus Christ. Then in the first part of chapter 7 he goes back over the same topic again, but uses a different figure, the figure of marriage. He points out that while we were married to our condition under Adam, under law by virtue of what Christ has done and our union with him we have now died to law. We have become married to another, the risen Christ. And consequentially, we are to serve in the newness of life not the oldness of the letter. Again, a reference to the Mosaic law. Later on in the 8th chapter of the epistle he will talk about spiritual or dynamic union by virtue of our relationship to the Holy Spirit and will conclude with what we, perhaps, could call eternal union in chapter 8, verse 18 through verse 39.

But now we are in something of a parenthetical section in verse 7 through 25 of Romans 7. The apostle is answering some objections that may have been raised by his doctrine. Remember the apostle was an individual who preached the gospel of Jesus Christ over the eastern world. He spent many an hour no doubt on the street corners, in the synagogues, in the schools as in Ephesus and in other public places debating the truths that have been revealed to him through the Holy Spirit, and he undoubtedly had had all of the objections lodged against the Christian truth that we ourselves have to contend with today. When he said, for example, that we had died with respect to sin and then in chapter 7 here follows it with we have died with respect to the law that raised questions in the minds of those who were listening to him.

Now he makes it very plain that is what he is saying. In verse 4 of chapter 7 he says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also have died to the law, have been put to death to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." In the 6th verse, he reiterates that. He says now we are released from the law having died to that in which we were held that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.

Now a thoughtful listener to the Apostle Paul, there are occasionally thoughtful listeners even on Sunday morning in the eleven o'clock service. They may have thought something like this. Now Paul you just said in chapter 6 that the believer has died in respect to sin, and now in chapter 7 the believer has died with respect to the law. If the believer has died with respect to sin, he had died with respect to the law are you not,

Paul, putting the two in the same category? Are you not saying that the law stands in the same category that sin stands in? Is God's law sinful?

Now that is the question that the apostle naturally raises. That's why he begins verse 7 by saying, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin?" And then he will spend his time answering it.

Now sin is a very unpopular subject, but it is one that Jesus Christ's ambassador must always drag out into the light. There are some who say, "Sin, why there is no such thing as sin. Let's banish that word from our vocabulary." As one commentator said, "Throw its jagged edges away." Let us be finished with such antiquated notions. But if you were to look out at the world scene today or look at the scene around your own neighborhood, what would you do? Why if you do not like the word sin you have to find some word to describe the situation that exists. I don't care what you call it whether you call it sin or whether you call it something else, but it must be called something that means the same thing as sin. Sinnecker called it the "universal insanity."

Now I don't really particularly like that because that's a psychological attempt to explain what sin is, but there is a universal madness to which we all have a part. And that is what the Bible means when it says all are under sin. Call it anomie, if you like. One of my favorite stories of one of our least popular United States Presidents of the 20th Century is the one concerning Calvin Coolidge. Mr. Coolidge once visited a church and was asked what the preacher spoke on. He was a very taciturn New Englander as you know and he simply said, "Sin." What did he say about it, Mr. Coolidge was asked? "He was against it," said Mr. Coolidge. [Laughter] Well that's the way the Bible speaks about sin. It speaks very forthrightly about it. It also is against it. As Charles Kingsley use to say to his particular congregation at Everestly, "We're going to talk today about what is really going on in your soul and mine and that is sin." The problem is stated very directly, "Is the law sinful?"

Now we must ask ourselves a question right at the beginning. What is Paul speaking about when he says is the law sin? What does he mean by law for the apostle uses the term law in a number of different senses? Well in this case it seems quite plain that he's referring to the Decalogue because he goes on to quote one of the Ten Commandments.

So when he says is the law sin he's speaking specifically of the moral law incorporated into the Law of Moses; those Ten Commandments which are not to ever be separated from the whole of the Mosaic law but what Reformed expositors call the moral part of the Mosaic law. So he's referring to that.

Now one might ask, well why was it God gave the moral law in the beginning long after the promises were given to Abraham? Well if you will back at Genesis chapter 12 you will note from a study of those promises that God gave to Abraham and to his seed there was no stress upon sin. There were references made to making the name of Abraham great. There were references made to ultimately kings coming from Abraham's seed, references made to a land that would be given to Abraham and to his seed permanently, but no reference to sin. Finally the time came when Israel need to be instructed in sin and so on Mount Sinai God gave to Israel the law, and the law was designed to add a stress that was not found in the Abrahamic promises that stress upon sin. Did God make a mistake in the gift of the law? No, the law was never intended to save people so the mistake of thinking that the law is a means of salvation is something

that has been the result of human thinking. The law was intended by God to be a gift of grace in that it shows us our sins, stirs up our sin so that we would see our guilt and our condemnation and would flee to the Lord Jesus Christ for the grace to cover our sin.

Now Paul's answer is as frequently, first of all, a direct rejection of the idea as being blasphemous. He says, "God forbid." And then he goes on to speak about specifically what the law did.

Now notice he didn't say anything about the law saving men for men are never saved by the Mosaic law. He doesn't even stress that because by this time his readers know that the law is not a saving instrumentality. That's one of the reasons why, I think, the apostle is not talking about law here as a saving instrumentality. He's talking about it as a code under which men live.

So what does the law do? Well Paul goes on to say the law is not sinful, "God forbid. Nay I have not known sin in but by the law." So the first thing the law did Paul says was to reveal sin. "I have not known sin." Isn't that a strange thing when you think about it? Here is the Apostle Paul, one of the leading representatives of the leading religion of the day, Judaism, and he is a man who confesses he had not known sin, "I have not known sin but by the law." That's an amazing thing. You know there is a verse in Jeremiah which I think is very apropos. Jeremiah in the 2nd chapter of his book writes, "Yet thou sayest," he's referring to the nation, "because I am innocent surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold I will plead with thee because thou sayest I have not sinned."

So the prophet here pictures the nation as saying I'm innocent. I have not sinned. Can you image that a nation that is the object of the revelation of God in the New Testament now in the days of the Prophet Jeremiah, hundreds of years after God has been dealing with them saying, I'm innocent? I am not sinful. That's a nation speaking mind you. They had enough of this Jeremiah the prophet with his continually denunciation of the gratitude, of their idolatry, and apostasy. Everywhere they looked there was Jeremiah. He was on the street corners like a later Jeremiah. He was on the city walls. He was in the council chambers with his insistent "thus saith the Lord." We stand guilty before the Lord God. Why can not this prophet be content? Why can not he like other religious people get over by the temple where the religious machinery is operating and spend his time over there? Why does he have to drag religion into all of our daily affairs, our business, our amusements, and even into our foreign policy? And so Jeremiah found himself preaching to a brick wall. They were saying I'm innocent. I have not sinned. Well God said that he was going to do something about that. "Yet thou saith because I'm innocent surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold I will plead with thee because thou saith I have not sinned." This is a nation speaking mind you, and if you think this is ancient history all you have to do is just sit in the United Nations and listen to the nations speaking today. All of the nations of today say I am innocent. I have not sinned in every issue that comes up before them. How often do you have men stand up representing a nation and saying now we as the nation of Egypt, we have sinned in this matter? You don't hear it. You hear the nations saying the same thing that the nation Israel said in the days of Jeremiah. Each one of them says that they are innocent.

Now somebody is lying, but it is always the other fellow who is lying. And everybody feels that his own country is the immaculate country. We feel that the United States of America is the immaculate country, and the trouble is with all of these

rapacious, cunning, wicked foreigners who are up there in the United Nations representing their peoples. The same thing happens in a smaller sphere. In our own city it is always somebody else, in our home, even in our families. Well, you know that aunt so and so is an impossible person or so and so began it all. I'm innocent. I'm not guilty. It's very easy for us to convince ourselves of our complete integrity and lay the entire blame somewhere else.

And now if we are just faced with something that we have to admit, that is that there is something a matter with our society, we call in science to the rescue. And so the psychologists come in and he says no, no it's not sin. It's temporary insanity. We're not really blamable for this, but its temporary insanity. Or we can in the biologist and he will say no, no it's not really depravity. That's what those Calvinists with those old fashion views say. What it is really is a chemical imbalance that exists in the body, and so on. I'm sure there is such a thing as temporary insanity. That may take place this afternoon at Texas stadium. Who knows there may be some temporary insanity out there? And also there is no doubt chemical imbalance, but to explain in a way the facts of human nature in that way is just not true to reality. Wouldn't you think that a generation that has to a great extent thrown off of the obligation of religious thinking entirely or to be free from the compulsion to go around and establish their own guiltlessness? If we say we don't believe the Bible, if we say we don't believe Christianity, if we say we don't believe in guilt, that condemnation why is it that we always feel that we have to find some way by which we can establish our own guiltlessness? You see there is something fundamental deep down in our heart that says yes there is such a thing as the existence of an eternal God and he is a righteous, holy being and the time is coming when we are to be subject to him in a final judgment of some form or another. Hypocrisy has been called tribute paid by vice to virtue, and the nations that are avowedly atheistic are only hypocritical when they seek to establish their own innocence before the nations of the world. What difference does it make if there is no ultimate calling to account?

The apostle said, "I have not known sin except the law said." Finally, God spoke to the apostle, torn away all those things that prevented him from seeing himself as he really was, and he saw that he was a sinner. And he becomes very specific. He says, "I had not known lust except the law said thou shall not lust or covet." It was as if God actually pulled away all of the shades and then catheterized him, looked down into his heart and saw that sin was there. "Search me oh God and know my heart." And the apostle was searched by the Holy Spirit, and God knew his heart and showed it to him. Where it happened Paul doesn't say. I assume that it probably happened on the Damascus Road. It was there that the apostle came to the conviction as a result of the vision that shown him that he had been persecuting the Lord Jesus Christ. It was there horror of horrors that he discovered that he was fighting against the God that he thought that he was serving. He went down in that lowly blind nest that came to him through the Ten Commandments which he knew as his own moral law and perhaps he got all the way down to this one, "Thou shalt not covet," until he realized yes I have broken that law. I stand before God guilty in breaking that law. I have broken the law of God. I am without hope. Perhaps that's how it happened. We don't know. Paul simply says that the law revealed his sin to him.

He says more than that. He says that law actually stirred up sin. In verse 8 we read, "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment." Now when sin sees the law it sees

red to use one of our figures. It runs wild. The law does not let sleeping dogs lie for the law says, "Thou shalt not," and it pierces those defenses that a man has. Those sleeping dogs of sin that exist in the life of an individual which seem inactive, like a serpent who's lying perfectly still until it begins to move it's not very much to fear, but when it begins to move oh what a difference. The apostle says that he had not known lust except the law said that and when the law came to him it stirred up sin in the apostle. An amazing fact that he should say that, but he says it more than once. Notice the 5th verse, "For when we were in the flesh, the sinful impulses which were by the law," it is the law that stirs up sin, reveals that things that are in the human heart.

And finally, he says in the 9th verse the law revealed his own spiritual death. Notice verses 9, 10, and 11, "For I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, (came to life, it was inactive, came to life, it was really there but it came to life) and I died. And the commandment, which was for life," for ideally and hypothetically, if a man should live up to the law perfectly from the time he drew his first breath till the end of his life upon this earth, hypothetically, righteousness may be bestowed upon him. Never done by anyone except our Lord Jesus Christ, hypothetically, the law was for life, but no one could keep the law.

So he says, "The commandment, which was to be for life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Perhaps, the apostle is thinking of the Garden of Eden and the deception of Eve and the result of death, but it is only the background of his thought. He's talking about the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Isn't it an amazing thing! Mr. Spurgeon has some very appropriate words, but isn't it an amazing thing that this thing that is holy, just, and good is the means for stirring up sin. Mr. Spurgeon said, "That must be a very terrible power which gathers strength from that which should restrain it and rushes on the more violently and proportionately as it is reigned in. Sin kills men by that which was ordained to life. It makes heavens gifts the stepping stones to hell. It uses the lamps of the temple to show the way to perdition. It makes the Ark of the Lord as in Ahas case the messenger of death. Sin is that strange fire that burns more fiercely for being damp, finding fuel in the water which was intended to quench it. The Lord brings good out of evil, but sin brings evil out of good."

You've noticed this no doubt in the activity of Christian believers. Let's just take a church, for example. Take a church like Believers Chapel. It's half alive and half dead, probably. That is there are some of you who are vitally alive with the faith and you're out in your own family and among your own friends, in your business, and in your activity you're a good representative of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is vitality there. If I were to speak to some of your friends and they didn't know that I knew you in referring to you they would say well they do have a very strong faith, and they do give a good testimony for their faith. On the other hand, there are some who attend the Chapel there's not a whole lot of life there. The hymns are called out. They do not sing. And it isn't because they cannot carry a tune. They don't have any desire to sing that tune down in their hearts. They are here. They hear the word, but they are not really responsive to it. If I were to speak to some of your friends and if they were to be told that you attend an evangelical church, they might say well I'm a little surprised. It's not so much that you're not an outstanding citizen in the community. I'm sure that most of you are. We may have some crooks here, of course. [Laughter] This is where they ought to be anyway,

hear the gospel; but nevertheless, they're probably some who are just very nominal kinds of attenders in the services of the Lord.

Now isn't it a strange thing that when a church is relatively dead spiritually, maybe orthodox but relatively dead spiritually people will say if their urged to get interested in spiritual things they'll say well, I don't think I want to go meet with them because that church is asleep. That church doesn't really believe what it talks about. But then if something happens in that church and the word of God is preached and there is a great response and the people become energetic and go out and seek to preach the gospel to their family and to their friends and to their acquaintances, people will then say well, I don't want to attend that church because they're all spiritual fanatics there. You see the only thing that sinners like is sin. That's the only thing that they're satisfied with. And there is always a reason for not associating with it. Nothing will please sinners but their sins.

Paul says the law, this law of God revealed his own spiritual death and it's the good thing, the good thing the law that revealed the death. Genuine Christianity often has the same effect as the law. It convicts men just as Noah building the ark convicted his age, so genuine Christianity convicts the world about us.

Now the apostle concludes in verse 12 with his conclusion by saying, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." That's the answer to the question is the law sinful? No the law is not sinful. The law is holy, just, and good. Some would then say well where is the trouble? Well in the next message the Lord willing we shall point to the source of the trouble, but the source of the trouble is not the law. The law is not sinful. Verse 12 answers verse 7. The law is holy. The commandment is holy, just, and good.

Many years ago when I was going through theological seminary, in our senior year, the fourth year of the theological course, in Greek exegesis taught by Professor Everett Harrison who for many years has been professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Professor Harrison assigned our class the assignment of writing a commentary on the first eight chapters of the Greek text of the Epistle to the Romans or chapters 9, 10, and 11 of the Greek text of Romans. This was the climax of our exegetical study. The next semester, the last one, we had the Epistle to the Hebrews but this was a rather lengthy assignment to write a commentary on the Greek text of eight chapters or three chapters. Well there was a young man there who was going through theological seminary with me and I had come out of the insurance business and the only thing I knew was what the Scofield Bible said because after I was converted someone gave me a Scofield Bible and I read all the way through it before I came to the seminary. I read all the notes. I read two commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans. Stiflers' Commentary and Newell's Commentary before I got to this theological seminary and that's about all of what I knew. Well one of my close friends there was a man who had attended a Bible College. Now it was a college that taught a little different attitude toward the law from the teaching at the theological seminary here in Dallas. So we had many discussions. When we arrived we immediately began a discussion of the relationship of the believer to the law.

Now he was more skilled in the Bible and theology than I was at the time, and he usually stumped me. But nevertheless, this argument continued and I got stronger and stronger as I became more acquainted with the New Testament and with the Bible. For

three years we argued this. We remained friends, very close friends and we still are friends. He is a pastor, a local pastor here in the city right now, a very godly man. [Laughter]

So our fourth year we came to the course in Romans, and Professor Harrison assigned us this commentary on the first eight chapters or chapters 9, 10, and 11. Since I had studied Romans 1 through 8 fairly carefully, I thought well I'll write my commentary on Romans 9, 10, and 11. I didn't even ask my friend what he was writing on. Near the end of the course, I can still remember, we got out of our chairs after the closing of the class. We walked toward the center of the room near where the professor was sitting, where he had been teaching, toward the exit and my friend walked over to me and put his arm around my shoulder and said, "Lewis, I just discovered something." And I said, "Well what?" He said, "I discovered we're not under the law." And I remember I said, "Well praise the Lord! What led you to that discovery?" I was disappointed that he didn't say well it was your acute argumentation. [Laughter]

But nevertheless, he didn't say that. He said, "Well I took as my term assignment the writing of the commentary on the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans." And he said, "Now when I got to chapter 6, verse 14 where Paul says sin shall not have dominion over you for you are not under the law but under grace," he said, "I understood that to be exactly as I had been taught. We are not under the law for justification. We are under grace. And so I explained that rather handedly. But," he said, "when I came to chapter 7 and the apostle says that we have died to the law I didn't have too much difficulty with that either for I sought to get out of it as we've been discussing it, but," he said, "when the apostle in verse 7 quotes from one of the Ten Commandments that indicated that when he said we have died to the law and we're not under the law that he's talking about the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue, and thus by the quotation from the commandments he indicates quite plainly that we are not under law." I think that he was right in his interpretation. When the apostle says we have died to the law, when he says we are not under the law he's referring to the Ten Commandments. We are not under the law as a code.

Now someone will say ah, that means that you can live as you please. Oh, no. How foolish! How foolish to say something like that. You forget all of the other things that Paul says. You also forget what he says in this epistle. He says that we are under the Holy Spirit. He says further, "Those who walk by the Spirit shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." And in this same epistle in the 4th verse of the 8th chapter he says that we are under the Spirit that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, for we walk after the flesh but not after the Spirit. No, no. We're not under the law as a code, but the righteousness of the law will be the product of the life related to Jesus Christ by union guided and directed by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Can we say then I'm innocent, I have not sinned as the nation was saying in Jeremiah's day? No. If we do we'll have God's word to contend with. "Behold I will plead with thee because thou saith I've not sinned."

What's the remedy? May we turn for just one moment to a light in the darkness, and this one from another Christian Jew. This Christian Jew's name was John, and like Paul, he was a person who was trained in Judaism. He was trained from the standpoint of a man who was under law. But one day he wrote by the grace of God the apocalypse given to him on the Isle of Patmos by the Holy Spirit, and in the midst of the salutation

which is found in the first chapter the Apostle John writes, "And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth unto him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and has made him a kingdom of priests unto God and to his Father." If you were to put your faith in a sentence what would you say? James Denney said, "I believe in God through Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord and Savior." That's not a bad statement. But these words of the Apostle John are just about as good as any one could say. "Unto him that loveth us and has washed us or loosed us from our sins in his own blood and has made us a kingdom of priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

"Unto him that loveth us," notice the present tense. We know all the past tenses of the faith all of those things that have to do with the ministry of Jesus Christ. Here is the tense, "Unto him that loveth us." Samuel Patrote Tragrellas, one of the most unusual students of the Greek New Testament that we have ever had for he learned his Greek New Testament by his own studies, was not taught in any academic institution but came ultimately to issue a critical text of the Greek New Testament. Samuel Tragrellas, when he discovered that that word, loved, as the Authorized Version has it is really loveth or the present tense in Greek says, "All of my studies in Greek are justified by simply learning from this one text that Jesus Christ loves us." It is the only place in the New Testament in which the verb love is used in the present tense of Jesus Christ's relationship to us.

"Unto him that loveth us." But then he says, "And has loosed us from our sins. This is the remedy. This is the remedy for sin as sin by the law, as stirred up by the law. Hinrich Hannah one day went in and looked at the famous statue of Venus De milo and he looked at it and finally he said something like this, but the goddess, the goddess has no arms with which to help poor persons such as I am. Well when we have a God such as the triune God of Scripture we have someone who has no limits to his grace. He is the one who has loosed us from our sins in his own precious blood. He's the one able to heal the leper. He's the one able to [give] sight to blind Bartimus. He's the one who is able to raise Lazarus from the grave. When a person says I'm sinful, he's able to minister to them. If a person says I'm defeated, he's able to give victory. If a person says I'm confused, I'm captive, I'm hardened, I'm guilty, Christ is able to minister the forgiveness of sins.

You see, there was finally a time when after men had said I'm innocent, I'm not guilty, I'm innocent, I'm not guilty, finally someone came along and said I'll take the blame. And Jesus Christ stepped forward and there on the cross at Calvary was meaded out upon him the guilt of sinners. And now sinners may come and receive the forgiveness of sins. What a magnificent picture!

"And hath made us kings and priests." Consequently, we can look at men about us and cannot be ashamed. We're kings. We are kings. A kingdom of priests, we can look men in the face without fear as sons of God. We can look God in the face by virtue of the priesthood that we confess, and bring our petition to him bring all our aspirations, our needs, we are a kingdom of priests. What a magnificent thing! "Unto him be glory and dominion."

It's natural to end on one great, glowing doxology. "I see a day coming," John says, "when he shall come and with him is the kingdom. Bring forth the royal diadem

and crown him Lord of all." Ah, Mr. Spurgeon said an old woman whom the great preacher was visiting, "If Jesus Christ does save me he'll never hear the last of it." [Laughter] Nor will we ever cease to praise him for in Emmanuel's land when we see him face face-to-face the King in all his glory we shall adoring cry, "Blessed Lord Jesus, redeemer of men the half was never told."

If you are here this morning and you've never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ we invite you to come to him. Receive as a free gift everlasting life. May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these wonderful words both of our sin, for it's a grace to have our sin revealed to us, and of the magnificent work of the Lord Jesus Christ who has loosed us from our sins in his precious blood. What wonderful, majestic, magnificent grace shown to us who are sinners. O God, if there are some here who have never come, may they come now to him who offers forgiveness of sins apart from works. For Jesus' sake. Amen.