



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Titus 1:1-4

“The Common Faith”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Turn with me now to the Epistle of Paul the apostle to Titus, Paul's letter to Titus. This Sunday morning and the next six I want to give a brief exposition of Paul's letter to Titus. And this morning we want to consider the salutation, the introduction to the epistle, and that is our Scripture reading. So Titus chapter 1, verses 1 through 4.

Now I'm saying all of these words in order that, of course, you may be able to find Titus in your Bibles. [Laughter] And for those of you who are still looking around, it's right next to Philemon, and so there should be no difficulty in finding it. As a last resort, it's always perfectly alright to use the index, table of contents.

Now will you listen as we read the four verses of the introduction to this epistle?

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; To Titus, mine own son (my genuine son, literally)

after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

You'll notice that Paul several times in this epistle to Titus speaks of God as our Saviour, and then quickly, lest we get any false impressions, adds the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. It is a little striking that the Father should be called Savior as well as the Son, but it illustrates the fact that the Father is our Savior through the gift of our Saviour Jesus Christ. And further, it illustrates that he is not embarrassed at all about giving our Lord the same titles that he gives to God the Father.

May God bless this reading from his word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the ministry of the Scriptures, for we know that it is through them that we have come to the possession of eternal life. And we thank Thee for the truth that they contain concerning the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. We rejoice in the promises made before the ages began. And we rejoice in the way that they have found their consummation, first, in our Lord's saving work, and then in the Spirit's application of them to us. And so, Lord, we acknowledge Thee today as our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. And we worship Thee. And we express to Thee the devotion of our hearts. And we confess that our devotion is not what it should be, that we often drift away from Thee, that we are often indifferent. We're often unconcerned. We're often sinful. We're often rebellious. At times, the sin principle, which dwells within our members, seems to control us utterly. We need Thee. We need Thy mercy. We need Thy grace.

And so, Lord, we pray that Thou would work in our hearts, that Thou would work to forgive the sin that must be confessed, that Thou would work in restoration, that Thou would restore unto us the fervor, the joy, the dedication, the gratitude that once we had

and which we so desperately need to continually have. So minister to us, Lord, in a spiritual way. We pray for our country, for its leadership, for our president in these difficult days, difficult politically, difficult economically, difficult morally. Wilt Thou give wisdom and guidance? And if it should please Thee, we pray that Thou would work in the hearts of the authorities who are over us. And enable us to be good citizens in this community in which we live, for that, too, is a command of holy Scripture. So enable us, Lord, by Thy grace to fulfill our place in our community.

We pray for the young people who are here and ask, O God, Thy blessing upon them, for those who have been given vision and burden with regard to ministry, for others who may not even yet know in a personal way Jesus Christ. O God, speak to them. Encourage them. Help and enable each as the needs exist. We commit the elders of this church to Thee and the deacons. We need Thy guidance. And we pray, O God, that Thou would give it in the difficult decisions that face us. We thank Thee for all that Thou hast done. It is Thy work. Thou art responsible. We are simply under-shepherds. Jesus Christ is our chief and ultimate shepherd. Lord, guide and direct us, guard us and keep us. And if it please Thee in Thy will, use us for Thy glory. Bless in the ministry that follows. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Our subject for this morning in the first of our series of seven studies in the Epistle to Titus is "The Common Faith." What do you really believe? What is your faith? In an age of uncertainty, it is popular to side with Tennyson. "You tell me," he said, "doubt is Devil-born. There lives more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds."

It is popular today to not be really, definitely sure of anything, and even among Christians. I am always reminded of the old story of a professing believer who was asked by a friend who was not what he believed. He said, "What do you believe?" He said, "I believe what my church believes." "Well, what does your church believe?" "Well, the

church believes what I believe." And exasperated he said, "Well, what do you both believe?" He said, "The same thing." [Laughter]

Professor Mascall and Philip Toynbee have traced the decline of Christianity to a failure of nerve in stating its case. It is a striking thing that Christians should say that it is really a Christian thing to not attempt to defend the faith among those who do not know anything about it. It remains for Christianity to invent that way of proclaiming its truth by not stating its case. And so they have suggested that one of the reasons for the failure about us is a failure of nerve.

John Wesley once made an experiment of this same idea. He records it in his journal. He says that he attempted to take a journey from the city of London to Leicester. And on the way he determined he was going to follow the advice of his friends who told him that he probably would do a better job of witnessing by saying nothing. And so he recounts what happened. He said, "For these two days I made an experiment, which I had been so often and earnestly pressed to do, speaking to none about the things of God unless my heart was free to do it."

Now, there's a great deal of truth in this. We cannot talk about it now.

"But what was the event? Why, first, that I spoke to none at all for four score miles together. No, not even to him that traveled with me in the chaise, unless a few words at first setting out. Second, that I had no cross either to bear or to take up and in an hour or two fell fast asleep. Three, that I had much respect shown to me wherever I came, everyone behaving to me as to a civil good-natured gentleman. Oh, how pleasing is all this to flesh and blood. Need ye compass sea and land to make proselytes to this," he said.

Now, there is a failure of nerve in Christianity because we are somehow or other, in 1971, embarrassed often that we are Christians. There is also a failure of knowledge. And these two failures, the failure of nerve and the failure of knowledge, account for much of the condition that exists in the church today and also in evangelicals.

Back in April, when I preached here, I got a little note through the mail as I often do. Most of the notes I get are very helpful. And this was a helpful one, too. And in this note, he enclosed a little clipping from the paper and had these words to say, "Just a note, Dr. Johnson, to encourage you on. I enjoyed the sermon last Sunday and have been provoked to love and good works by God speaking and ministering through you."

And the clipping was the interesting thing. He said, "And in this clipping, an American Baptist pastor has said that perhaps it would be a good help in deciding on whether you are going to get out of the bed on Sunday morning and go to church or not to know what kind of sermon is to be preached that morning. And he suggested that we should rate sermons like we rate the movies. And he suggested a code for rating sermons and also has a suggestion about what he meant by these terms.

The sermon rated "G" would be one that was generally acceptable to everyone, full of inoffensive, pureal platitudes such as "Go ye into all the world and smile," [Laughter] and "What the world needs is peace and motherhood." And this sermon, he says, is usually described as wonderful or marvelous. And then for the sermon rated "M", that's for more mature congregations. At times this sermon even makes the gospel relevant to today's issues, in subtle ways of course. It may even contain mild suggestions for change. This sermon is often described as challenging or thought-provoking, even though no one intends to take any action or change any attitudes.

And then the sermon rated "R", definitely restricted to those who are not upset by truth. This sermon tells it like it is. It's very threatening to the comfortable. It is most often described as disturbing or controversial, and usually indicates that the preacher has an outside source of income. [Laughter] And the final one rated "X", positively limited to those who can handle explosive ideas. This sermon really socks it to 'em. It's the kind of sermon that landed Jeremiah in the well, got Amos run out of town and set things up for the stoning of Stephen. It is always described as shocking or in poor taste. The minister

who preaches this sermon had better have his suitcase packed and his life insurance paid up.

Now I don't know. By the way, he had another little note which I ought to read you, too. He said, "P. S. I feel that last Sunday was to be rated "R", and I'm going to really pray for you if you're led toward the "X" rating."

Now, it would seem to me that most of Paul's sermons would be rated in the "R" or "X" category, too. Now there is no failure of nerve in the apostle's sermons which we have recorded for us in the books of Acts or in his epistles. And there surely is no failure of knowledge, for he has given us, out of his apostolic calling and experience and function, tremendous revelation of truth. And Titus is one of such epistles.

It is often called the epistle of good works because the term good work or good works is mentioned so often in it. Let me read you the verses, verse 16 of chapter 1, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

Verse 7 of chapter 2, "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity."

Chapter 2, verse 14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Chapter 3, verse 1, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work."

Verse 8, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

And finally, verse 14, "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."

We might even outline the Epistle to Titus around this theme of good works, for we could say in chapter one, Paul sets forth good works in the congregational life. In

chapter two, good works in the family and individual life. And in chapter three, good works in the public life.

Well, that's the general overall scheme that I will be following. But today we want to look at the salutation. And I ask you the question, What do you really believe? What is your faith? Because in this salutation, Paul has given us a concise cameo of his faith and, ideally, of that which should be our faith. And there is no failure of nerve, and there is no failure of knowledge in what the apostle has to say.

Now he begins by mentioning his name. It was the custom in ancient times in the writing of an epistle such as this to give one's name first. And he says, "Paul." Now that very term contradicts a large segment of modern scholarship which believes that Paul the apostle, while his teaching may have been ultimately responsible for the epistle, did not write it. On the other hand, there are some outstanding men, such as Donald Guthrie, C. Speak, a Catholic, and the great Joachim Jeremias, three outstanding New Testament scholars, at least, who favor the Pauline authorship of the pastorals.

So far as we know, external evidence lies heavily on the weight on the side of the Pauline authorship, and so we are accepting the Pauline authorship of this epistle or that the author is really "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ."

Now having mentioned himself this way, he launches into his address which is in a sense a lengthy justification of his apostleship. And I think that confirms the idea that this epistle is not addressed simply to Titus but has a wider audience in view. I think that it is obvious that Titus, who was so closely related to Paul, would not have needed a lengthy justification of the apostleship of Paul. In the first place, he had been converted through the preaching of Paul. He was his own genuine son. It was not necessary to defend his apostleship to Titus. But you see, Titus had entry to a wider group, the churches on the isle of Crete. And consequently, through Titus this letter may serve a distinct purpose of supporting the apostolic authority of Paul, and thus, ultimately the authority of his teaching.

A long time ago when I first read this in the Greek text, I noticed something which I had, of course, never noticed until I did read it in the Greek text. But in the 15th verse of the 3rd chapter, the epistle closes with "Grace be with you all." And I noticed as I read the Greek text that, of course, this was plural.

Now any Southerner, of course, reading that would know that that meant more than one, "Grace be with you all." But there is no question, the Greek text was plural which indicated that Paul himself anticipated this epistle would be read by more persons than Titus himself. I only mention, of course, that it is obvious from that that Paul is a Southerner by tone and disposition, if not in reality. I've often said here to you he must have come from southern Tarsus, but I warn you that is not really stated in the Bible.

Now the second, as he begins this second part of his message in the salutation, he speaks of his position by the use of these two terms: "servant" and "apostle." Now these are two great expressions, "servant of God" and "apostle of Jesus Christ." And both of these expressions are designed to set forth his right to speak. He is a servant of God, and that general designation sets him in the line of a great succession, for the preeminent servant of God prophesied of in the Old Testament, set forth for us in the New Testament in his work, is Jesus Christ. He is the servant of God.

Now the prophets of the Old Testament were called the servants of God. Moses was called the servant of God. Joshua was called the servant of God. To speak of oneself as the servant of God is to set himself in a great succession. It was the tone of Paul's life. He was a slave of God.

And secondly, he is an apostle of Jesus Christ. And this special designation points to his authority. He wants us to understand that he comes as the personal representative of the one who is Lord of all. And you may remember that this precise word, apostle or sent one or to the verb form to send forth, is used of Paul by our Lord. He is sent forth to the Gentiles. And this very root is used more than once of Paul's relationship to Jesus

Christ. Well that means simply this, that when Paul speaks, he speaks with authority. He speaks with no perhaps. He speaks with no maybe, with no possibly.

Have you ever noticed that about Paul? He does not speak like modern scholars speak. It is the general opinion that or modern scholarship agrees that or it is a safe thing to say that. It is the consensus of other students of Scripture that. Paul does not use maybe's, perhaps's, possibly's. Rarely if ever, does he introduce anything like that, because he spoke with authority. And he sensed that what he spoke was the will and the word of God.

Well, having mentioned his position as servant and apostle, he launches into an expression, an exposition, of his function. And in a sense he elucidates or he explains what it means to be an apostle and what an apostle does. What is his message? What are the ramifications of it?

And this is what I want to stress in our fifteen minutes or so that we have left. I want you to notice that as we move through this very rapidly, that there are seven articles of what may be called "The Common Faith," which he and Titus have. In other words, if you were to say to Paul this morning, Now Paul, what do you believe? What do you really believe? What is your faith? Included in the answer to that question would be these seven things that are set forth here.

Now, I want you to notice the first.

Now before I say anything about the first, I must apologize. When I went over to North Carolina this summer, as I warned you, I was going over there to sit out on the front porch of our family home there, put my feet up on the railing, and rest and read. Now, I'm not a prophet or the son of a prophet, and consequently, a lot of what I thought I was going to do, I didn't do. But I did get a chance to prop my feet on the railing in seventy-two degree weather, and every time I took the paper home and looked at it, Dallas a hundred and three, I smiled. [Laughter] And I thought of you, and I started writing Mr. Prier and I understand he made a few announcements. And he appealed so

strongly to me over there that I, in the middle of August arranged for, well the first of August, arranged for you to get some pretty good weather. And I was real happy to be able to do that.

But anyway, when I put my feet up on that railing, I made a resolution. And the resolution was I will not speak much at all about the doctrine of election this fall, because it was obvious I had overdone it this past year. And some of you, every time I mention the doctrine of election, you laugh just as you did then. So I made a good resolution there, I would not mention it. But then a few weeks ago as I was thinking about what shall I do about the seven weeks that I'm going to be preaching here, I thought, well, I think we need to study the Epistle of Titus. And here as I opened it up, I had forgotten the very first phrase, "according to the faith of God's elect." There it is. You know, every where you go in the Bible, there it is. It's the same old wonderful doctrine of election.

Now, I want to stress something slightly different for a moment. You will notice that Paul says he is an apostle "according to the faith of God's elect." What does he mean by that? Well, I think he means simply this: that he teaches no doctrine that is contrary to the faith of the saints. He is an apostle according to the faith of God's elect. His apostleship and their belief, well they are similar, so far as the truth of them is concerned. He teaches the faith that Abraham believed. He teaches the faith that David believed. He teaches the faith that our Lord proclaimed. He teaches the faith of the saints.

Now of course, I am not for any, or do not think that I am saying that everything that Paul preached is found precisely in the Old Testament. It is obvious in the progress of Revelation that God has given us additional and fuller explanations of truth, and occasionally, he has launched us out into something that is new. But everything that Paul proclaimed is in harmony with the faith of God's elect. And I would think that if we are Pauline, we shall do the same. That is, if we are really in apostolic succession, it doesn't make a bit of difference what church we are in, it's what is our doctrine that makes us apostolic. And the apostle claims to be in harmony with the faith of all the saints. And

so, all the saints of God from Adam on, they all have certain great truths in the possession of one another. They all have these truths in common. It is our common faith. And the first here is election according to the faith of God's elect.

Now, I believe in election. I'll only state I believe that God chose me. And I believe that there are elect ones. I believe also that everybody would be lost were it not for the fact that God has chosen some. I believe that I owe my faith to my election and not my election to my faith. I believe that salvation is not a human birthright. I believe that that was lost when Adam sinned. And no person has a claim on God. If he in wonderful grace stoops and works in our hearts through the ministry of the Spirit and brings us to trust in Christ, it is not because we have anything at all with which to commend ourselves before God. And if he brings some, others do not have any excuse. They are lost because of their sin.

Now, that's my faith. That's what I believe. That may be rated by you "X", but it's apostolic, so far as I can tell.

Now, second. That's the first of the articles of faith, election. He says, "And the acknowledging of the truth" or as the Greek text puts it, "And the full knowledge of the truth." For you see, it's not enough to have salvation. We must have knowledge of truth. Salvation is the beginning of the Christian life. But it's just the beginning. Christian evangelism leads on to Christian education. And if you think for one moment that our aim is simply to bring you within the family of God and that's it, you're mistaken. Our aim is to bring you within the family of God and then to bring you to the knowledge of truth through the instruction in the Scriptures. It is the aim of God to bring us to Jesus Christ and then to the truth of Jesus Christ. This is the second feature of the common faith. We believe in Christian education in the sense of instruction in the Scriptures.

Third, Paul says, "The acknowledging (or the full knowledge) of the truth which is after godliness." Now this is tremendously important, as well. This is the product of truth. If we have believed in Jesus Christ and we are instructed in the truth of Scripture,

then there should be the product of godliness. The truth's product is godliness. If the truth does not produce godliness, it is not God's truth, or else we are not responsive to it at all.

Now John Calvin said, "Since all superfluous questionings which do not tend to edification should rightly be suspect and even detested by godly men. The only legitimate commendation of doctrine is that it instructs us in the reverence and fear of God. Thus we're taught that the man who has made most progress in godliness is the best disciple of Christ. And the only man who should be counted a real theologian is he who can build up men's consciences in the fear of God."

Now I believe that with all my heart. I believe that in Believers Chapel if we are true to the apostolic teaching, we shall preach the gospel and we shall have men brought to faith in Jesus Christ. We shall seek to instruct them in the truth of the word of God giving out the truth as it is. And then we should look for progress in godliness in Christian living. We should be progressing in the fear of God. We should be progressing in true reverence before him. We should be progressing in holiness. There should be a difference, and it should be a constantly growing difference. And if we are not, we are failing. It's the truth which is after godliness. That's the test.

Then Paul says in verse 2, that's the third feature of his faith. He says, "In hope of eternal life." Now this hope, this salvation in the fullest sense for eternal life here, does not mean the eternal life that we possess when we believe in our Lord simply, nor the eternal life that we are enjoying already. But he's speaking about the time when we get in the presence of God and we shall enjoy eternal life in its fulness.

"In hope of eternal life." Paul says this hope of eternal life is the basic incentive of his ministry as an apostle. He ministers as an apostle in the hope of eternal life. And as Christians, this is our hope. We have a great deal of what we shall have, for we have the Holy Spirit. And we have life. We are born again. We have new life. And we're

enjoying the experience of it day by day. And it should be a growing thing. But we don't have it all yet.

And I can look out on you as an audience, and I know we don't have it all yet. And you look at me for saying a nasty thing like that, and you know, well, he doesn't have it either. And it's true. We don't have it yet. It's the hope of eternal life in its fulness that Paul refers to. And that's a fourth feature of our faith. And if we let the world know this, and perhaps they may realize that we are not perfect yet.

Now, he goes on to say, "Which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Now I don't have time to enter into this because I'm going to take five minutes more than we ordinarily have. That doesn't mean fifteen after, only about ten after or seven after, because of those lengthy announcements the elders made me make this morning. I wish I had time to talk about the great covenant, the everlasting covenant consummated between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, worked out in the experience of our Lord, the ministry of the Spirit in the present time. I do believe with all my heart that there was a decree of life, promise of life, decree of life. Part of that eternal covenant was the disposition by the Trinity of the work of the Trinity in our salvation. I think that decree of life means that God foreknows certain people. As Paul says, "Whom he has foreknown."

Now that doesn't mean simply that he looked down through the years and saw that we would believe. Foreknown is the Hebrew word for election, but it stresses the personal side of it, the intimate side of it. God knew me. He knew me in eternity, chose me, knew me. And in time I appeared on the scene, and he was not surprised. He may have been disheartened, [Laughter] but he wasn't surprised. And in time the Spirit worked, when I did not wish him to work, and overcame all of my rebellion. And irresistible, invincible grace brought me to Jesus Christ, a tribute to his mighty working power. He can save even me, eternal life promised before the world began. And then he

says. That, by the way, is the fifth aspect of Paul's faith, the decree of life in the foreknowledge of God.

Now he says, "But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching." Now I need not enter into all that this means. But it's obvious that what it does mean is that at a point in time, Jesus Christ, the promised one, came. He carried out his ministry and his ministry, then having been carried out, was preached by the apostles and others to the four corners of the then earth, "Manifested," as he says, "his word through preaching."

Now it would seem to me that this is an exhibition of the faithfulness of the promise that was consummated in eternity because it is seen in history. It is carried out. It takes place in the ministry of our Lord. And it is proclaimed by the apostles. And the sixth feature of Paul's faith is the Messianic ministry and the message of it.

Then in the 4th verse he says, "To Titus, my genuine son." Now Titus, it is often said, was a pastor of a local church. I must disagree with that viewpoint. I do not think that that is true. I do think it is entirely possible that Titus may be regarded as a man who has the gift of pastor-teacher. But he had no settled charge. He was, so far as I can tell, a trustworthy, confidential delegate of the apostle. I would call him an apostolic legit. He is a man like Timothy who was associated with Paul and whom Paul felt was the kind of man that he could rely on to carry out any tasks that he desired to be carried out.

Titus is his own or genuine son in the faith. That is, he was apparently Paul's convert. And he was a genuine son. There is an old story about Mr. Moody. I don't know how true it is. That he was walking down the streets of one of our cities and a drunk staggered up to him and said, Hi, Mr. Moody, remember me? And Mr. Moody said, No. He said, Well, I'm one of your converts. And Mr. Moody is reported to have said, Well, you must be one of mine, because you're surely not one of God's.

Now here is Titus who was Paul's genuine, his genuine son after the common faith. There are things that he and Titus share, the common belief.

Now let me sum up what I've been trying to say. Here are the beliefs that the elect share. If I were to ask you what do you really believe? What is your faith? It should, it seems to me, include these things that Paul has set forth for us. First, there is the decree of life according to the purpose of God. You remember when Paul says in Romans chapter 8, verse 28 that "All things work together for good to those that love God, to those that are called according to his purpose." This is his purpose of foreordination and foreknowledge. That should be a part of your faith. As he says, it is the promise of life, "Eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," the decree of life eternal.

Secondly, it should include the election to salvation. It would seem obvious that there are those that are the elect of God. And so, election should also be part of our faith. Not only that God has a great decree and a purpose and a covenant within the Trinity, but that we belong to that elect company which flow out of that counsel of eternity. And third, the ministry of the Messiah, for in time the one came who was to fulfil the promises of God, and in dying upon a cross at Calvary, made it possible for the salvation ministry to come to pass. And fourth, salvation by faith, for we have mention of the faith of God's elect. We have faith of the common faith. And we have God called our Saviour and Jesus Christ called our Saviour.

And then fifthly, the knowledge of truth. We should believe that there is a knowledge, a full knowledge of truth in which we should be instructed. And the word of God contains that truth. Sixth, that there should flow out of the knowledge of truth godliness in life. And we should expect to believe that the truth that we hold should make a difference in our lives. And finally, that there is an eternal life to be experienced in its fulness in the future.

There it is, the decree of life, the election to salvation, the ministry of the Messiah, salvation by faith wrought by God, the knowledge of truth, godliness in life, and the final

eternal life. Can we really believe all this? Can you believe election? Can you believe that God actually has an eternal purpose for this world and for me?

Well now, Dr. Johnson, you may believe that, but I know, I know it's taught in the Bible, but I'm not sure I can believe it. It just does not seem fair to me. It just does not seem to be sensible to me. It just does not seem to be logical to me.

Now, I have skipped one little phrase, one little clause, because I want to try to bring home to you the force of it. In verse 2 it says, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie." "God, that cannot lie." Can we trust a God who cannot lie? Or could there ever be any person who does not lie?

Lies are the warp and woof of life. Politics, lying, lying, lying, lying. Listen to the candidates as they give us their promises. And then look at them when they get in office. Lies, lies, lies. Full of lies. Someone has said, "Diplomacy is simply the art of lying well."

Economics, we will not devalue the dollar. We shall by no means devalue the dollar. There is not the slightest chance that we shall devalue the dollar. One thing we want to do is to protect our currency. Monday morning, the dollar, the dollar has been devalued. In Britain before they devalued the pound, three times official pronouncements were made in the week preceding. We will by no means devalue the pound. Monday morning, it was devalued. Then they justified it. We couldn't say we would, could we? Lies, lies, lies.

And then in religion, the man stands in the pulpit and he lies. He says he believes one thing when he really doesn't believe it. He uses language that does not have the meaning that you think it has. He speaks with forked tongue. Lies, lies, lies.

But we have a God that cannot lie. He cannot lie. Why, he cannot lie because he is all wise. He knows the end from the beginning. Why should he lie? He is all powerful. He has nothing to gain by lying. He has everything. He doesn't need our applause. And so he does not lie to gain it. He is immutable. He does not change. He is the same tomorrow that he is today. We don't get up in the morning and say, Oh God,

how are you? What are you doing today? He's the same truthful God. He's the God who cannot lie. And that means that his promises are true. And that means that his threats are true. Asks the wastes of Ninevah. Asks the mounds of Babylon. Is God truthful to his word? Ask the coast of Tyre and Sidon. Is he true to his word? They all shall answer, God cannot lie.

And then look at the varieties of infidelity that have arisen down through the years. From Baal to Buddha, from Baltar to Madalyn Murray O'Hair. From Tom Paine to Tom Althouser. They're all liars and dead, but he's the living God, the God that cannot lie. His decrees are not written on sand so that you can blow on it and change it. They are written in the eternal brass of his unchangeable nature. He is a God who cannot lie.

And he tells us all of these wonderful things in his word: That he has an eternal purpose, that he has an elect company, that he has a ministry of the Messiah which has come to pass and salvation is possible through him. And that he desires that we will see this ministry and grow in the knowledge of the truth which leads to godliness in hope of eternal life.

And he cannot lie. It's true. Do you have it? Have you put your trust in Jesus Christ? Would you like to be one of the elect? You can always settle that question, for you see, all who believe in Jesus Christ truly, they are members of the elect. And the invitation goes out to all, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," says a God who cannot lie.

May we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the ministry of the word of God. And we are grateful to Thee, our great God who cannot lie. How wonderful to know there is one person in this universe, three persons, who are faithful to their word. Lord, by the Holy Spirit, bring any who do not know Jesus Christ to him. And then build us up in the

truth which is after godliness we pray. Now may grace, mercy and peace go with us as we part. For Jesus' sake. Amen.