



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John Bunyan Conference -- Lecture II

TRANSCRIPT

[Lecture] Well, thank you very much. Applause belongs to God, it seems to me. I've been asked to say a word about a book that I have read, Tom Wells' book, *The Meaning of Christ's Death*. And I'm happy to do this because I have read it. I have enjoyed. I've even turned back to read some things in it for preparation for ministry on particular places. In my mind it's one of the finest of the books on this topic. And what's so nice about it is that Tom has written this in the kind of language that even you people will understand. [Laughter]

And he wrote me a letter, I couldn't find that statement in here, but he wrote me a letter a couple of years ago and sent me a copy of this book. I had known him in Dallas. He had worked in the book room at the Seminary, thought I don't think he ever attended a class. But he was there at Dallas and worked in the book room at the seminary and I got well acquainted with him. I didn't know anything about his skills as a Bible teacher or preacher. And it was many years ago. He said in this letter to me that he wrote this book for people with, and I cannot remember, Fred Zaspel remembers, but the age level was something like a high elementary school level. It's really not that level, but that's what he tried to do. It's simple, it's clear. It's to the point, and some of the critical questions that will come up with anyone and even theological seminary professors who majored a little bit in this, their answer is in this book with reference to those questions.

And I would like to recommend it particularly. I understand there are a number of copies of this available at really an outstanding price. And if I had any room I would buy a couple of more to take back, because I like to give it out. It's a great bargain, I suggest that if you have not read it, you get it and read it. And I think you'll probably want to distribute it too to some of your friends.

I've been asked to speak today on the topic of John's interpretation of the Son's mission or his interpretation of the cross. And so I'm asking you if you will to turn to 1 John chapter 2 verse 1 and verse 2. And we'll take a look at this controversial passage, that is controversial among believing men who seek to understand the atonement that the Scriptures set forth. 1 John chapter 2 verse 1 and verse 2. The apostle writes, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Many of us think that 1 John was written not primarily to bring sinners to salvation, but to bring God's children to assurance of the life that we have in Jesus Christ. For example, in one of the last verses of this particular epistle, chapter 5, verse 13 the apostle writes, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may that ye have eternal life." That last phrase or two in the Authorized Version is probably not genuine. And so we should read it in the way that I've just read it, "That ye may know that ye have eternal life." So what he's seeking to do essentially is to bring sons to assurance of life. That life is not a sinless life, of course, we know that very well. But it is a sin-judged life. And that's the idea that is characteristic not only of John but of Paul and even of the Old Testament prophets as well.

Moderns like to call John the Apostle of Love. And I don't debate that. He is an apostle of love. I think the Apostle Paul is also an apostle of love. But the early church did not call him the apostle of love; do you know what they called John? They called him "The Theologian," a *theologos*. That actually was the expression used with reference to

him, "The Theologian." Being the last of the apostles, of course, and writing as the theologian, his writings have great significance for us. I love the way he finishes his little epistle. He says in verse 18 of chapter 5, "We know." Isn't that interesting? "We know," we don't think, "we know that whosoever is born of God does not go on sinning, but he is that is begotten of God keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not." "We know," verse 19, "that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness or in the wicked one. And that we know that the Son of God has come and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true and we are in him that it true even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God," the genuine God, *alethenos* not *alethes*, but *alethenos*, the genuine God, "and eternal life."

This then is the theologian, and what the theologian finds as his stay is the advocate that we've just read about. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate." So the ground of the saints' comfort is the advocacy and the advocacy finds its consummation in the propitiation which John mentions in the second verse here. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." In chapter 4 he also mentions that fact. In verse 10 he writes "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Isn't that striking? The Apostle John defines love as the propitiation. And to understand propitiation it may be defined as that which is represented by the coming of Jesus Christ. It's very simple, "Herein is love."

Now today love is not that kind of love at all. If you want to know what love is, "He gave his Son as a propitiation." That's what love is. When people say, "I'm not interested in biblical doctrine, I'm interested in love, well I am too." Let's talk about the propitiation that our Lord has offered in his saving work on Calvary's cross. The apostle's definitions of things are quite a bit different from our definition of things, aren't they so often?

Well now, he finds the believers' stay and comfort in the advocate. The ground of their comfort is the propitiation, and by this the covenantal community, the church, has its life and fellowship. I'm sure if John were to talk in detail about the subject of the propitiation he would talk to us ultimately about the great day of atonement. We don't have time to talk about it, but I know that many of you in this audience are acquainted with the major features of that great ordinance which was carried out once a year among the children of Israel. There was, of course, the offering of the animal for the high priest who was to carry out the work of propitiation and then ultimately the sacrifice of the goat, the confession over the goat of the sins of the children of Israel after the goat has been slain as the propitiatory animal and sent off into a wilderness. The Authorized Version in one of its places says, "Sent off into a land not inhabited." Actually the Hebrew text is "a land cut off."

The idea is it's not going to come back, those sins that have been propitiated, and the propitiation that has been accomplished takes care of those sins forever, and they've gone. Once a year, and that was repeated every year in order that Israel might stay in right relationship with the one who had given them that marvelous ceremony of the great Day of Atonement. So when John speaks about the advocate lying in his mind in the background of it is that great day of atonement where propitiation is made and Israel was enabled to continue to live its relationship for one more year. The ground of the saints' comfort then is in the propitiation. This is that around which the covenantal community has its fellowship.

Now John talks first of all about the competence of this advocate. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." Now this is his analysis of his advocacy, Jesus Christ the righteous. Like a father he points them to the character and confidence of the priestly advocate with his representation, with his offering, with his intercession, Jesus Christ the righteous. Think of his name, Jesus, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his

people from their sins," a Savior, advocacy, Jesus Christos. That's the name of the Messiah, the Savior who is the Messiah. The advocacy is incompatible with the toleration of evil, because the advocate is the Savior, the Messiah. The name which was as ointment poured forth for the children of Israel is as ointment poured forth for us is it not? Jesus Christ the righteous. And of course the term *tsedeq* speaks of the advocacy of the Son of God as the mediator who saves not by persuasion of a weak ruler, but saves by virtue of his sacrifice. That's the way by which our Savior saves, so he is Jesus the Savior. He is *Christos*, that's his title. But more than that, as if to emphasize the point, not contrary to the previous, he says, "Jesus Christ the righteous." So this is the advocate that we have.

Now what is the ground of his advocacy, we might ask? And so in verse 2 John leads us into a discussion of that. "And he," that is Jesus Christ the righteous, "he is," incidentally, in the original text that emphatic. "And he himself is the propitiation." "He himself" intensive. "He himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." So the competence of our advocate is established. The favorable conditions upon which he appears with the Father, suggests then the grounds, magnificent grounds, his priestly offering, the satisfaction of the Father-Judge. I put that hyphenated in my own thinking, the Father-Judge. In Ephesians chapter 5, in verse 2, the Apostle Paul, also a theologian but not called the theologian by the early church, "And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." Paul speaks of the same kind of thing, that it is the offering that is the ground of the advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ. So the picture of the thorn crowned agonizing Son of God on Calvary's cross pouring out his soul for me is the picture that the New Testament presents us. It's not a bare asking for forgiveness for his people. That would not work, even for the Son of God. It would not work for him to say, "Father forgive them." Ultimately there must be the sacrifice, the propitiation. So this is the thing Jesus Christ emphasizes.

I like to think of Jesus Christ, of course so far as we know he was an old man, he was older than I am and that's pretty old. [Laughter] And I can imagine this old man speaking with the authority that he evidently spoke with and reminding them of the fact that the ground of the salvation that we think we have and that we are enjoying is the sacrifice of the great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not something even he could gain by merely asking, but he must also offer the blood sacrifice. Furthermore, this is his continual work. That sacrifice once offered is the ground of his continuing appeals for forgiveness for eternal salvation, for every one of you in this audience who belong to him. At this very moment we know he is carrying out his priestly intercession, for the priestly intercession is the continuation of what began on Calvary's cross. So what he pleads is the value of what he's accomplished on Calvary's cross. And furthermore, we know he doesn't plead for the world. He pleads for his own. He tells us that ahead of time, "I don't pray for the world." He prays for his own. He pleads for those who are the products of his sacrifice. And so the sacrifice has its continuation in that sense in the intercessory work of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's one of the greatest reasons why we believe he died for his elect people alone. For he continues to intercede for his elect people alone.

His sacrificial work as great high priest is the ground for that doctrine and he is continuing to this very moment to pray to that end on the ground of that. So the Old Testament prefiguring of it, was as I mentioned, the great day of atonement. Other sacrifices, of course, give us various aspects of the atoning work of Christ. But that's the great one. And that in that are that great sacrifice, our Lord is seen as placable in the day. The Jews called the day of atonement Hayom, the day. It was the day, everyone knew what the day was, it was the day of atonement. So I emphasize the point, he's made gracious by satisfaction because he's the one who provides it. He's the one who provides it.

William G.T. Shedd has an interesting statement with reference to some of the modern discussions of the atonement. I think I can probably find it here in some notes that I have. "It's very common for people to say today that if you believe that Jesus Christ is the propitiation, and that it was necessary for him to shed his blood in order for men to be saved. And that only thereby may God be seen to be just in his saving work. That seems to erase the thought of love and mercy in the atoning work." And we know if we read the Scriptures love and mercy shine out in the saving work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So that's an argument that modern theologians make against the kind of atonement that most of you in this audience believe in, atonement through propitiation. And the justice and holiness of God satisfied in that atoning work.

But where is the love? Well, one of my favorite theologians among some others, but he has been for a long time, is William G.T. Shedd. And he has an interesting little statement in volume one of his work. It speaks so specifically to modern theologians today, men such as John Hick, who has a big name, has had a big name, and has a name big enough to get in the papers as representing Christianity. But Dr. Shedd says this, "These two particulars of permitting substitution and providing the substitute furnish the answer to the question, where is the mercy of God in case justice is strictly satisfied by a vicarious person? There is mercy," Shedd says, "in permitting another person to do for the sinner what the sinner is bound to do for himself. And still greater mercy in providing that person, and greater still in becoming that person." That's the mercy of the atoning work that he himself has accomplished what his own nature requires. I'm sorry John Hick, but what you've said is contrary to holy Scripture. The greatest mercy of all is found in the very thing that you find none in. "So beneath the fire of God's love, one of the commentators has said, "glows the fire of his love."

Well, the cost of it has impressed us greatly; natural law proclaims the way of the transgressor is hard. And one can understand something of it when we read what was required in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. How to set men right is the *quaestio vexata*

of the ages, the vexed question of the ages. And John writes about it. He's wrestled with it, and he's given us his answer, he himself is the propitiation. There is no other priest. There is no other victim. There is no other intercession. He himself, he and no other is that. Does he care for me? As we asked last night, and concluded that he did. This is the evidence of it. He does care for us. This is the greatest exhibition of care for us that it could possibly be. He cares for us to the extent that the atoning work is for me and for you.

Now, the sufficiency of this atonement. John says that this atoning work is available for the whole world of Jews and Gentiles. In other words, it has no local validity. Wherever there are Jews. Wherever there are Gentiles, the saving work of Jesus Christ is there for them. The universal provision, no peculiar treatment for believers. No sinner is beyond the reach of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I personally believe that when he says he's "the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," he is talking about the sins of Jews and Gentiles. There are many reasons why that I think that's true. We don't have time to get into the details of the theological argument for that.

I think if you'll just reflect upon the fact that the Apostle John is writing in the days in which Christianity is spread out over the ancient Roman world. He's writing from previous to his stay on Patmos, and you'll find him out in the world, so to speak. And I'm sure that John has marveled at the fact that the truth of God has gone out among the Gentiles, and so it would be natural for him to say that he's "the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," because now Christianity has gone out among the Gentiles. And if you read the scholarly work on the New Testament introductory facts one can see the legitimacy of that particular interpretation. There are other interpretations that preserve the intent of the atonement that most of you believe here. But that's the one that has appealed to me, and so I personally think of that as being what this text says. That Jesus Christ, "Is the propitiation for our sins: and not for

ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." But that does not mean that that atoning work was given by the Lord God with the intent of saving everyone and that that intent has failed as we know it down through the years.

I have a student who has written a book on the atonement. I must say he's a godly man. We are good friends. He stands for the truth. In fact, he stands for the truth among some of my friends who don't stand nearly as staunchly as he does. And he's written a book on the atoning work and he calls his interpretation a universal atonement, as the "normal unbiased approach." Those are his words, quote, and "normal unbiased approach." So I have the abnormal biased approach [Laughter] but we've remained friends, and we'll have to wait and see who's right. But I think there are wonderful reasons why that particular approach is not really the "normal unbiased approach."

The term world occurs in the New Testament about one hundred and eighty-five times. It has about ten senses. You probably know that. If you'd like to read some details about it read John Owens' 10th volume. That's an exercise for anyone. And I guarantee you if you will get through it, if you just simply read through it and think with Mr. Owens, it's almost impossible for you to come to any other viewpoint than Mr. Owens on the atoning work of Jesus Christ. There are details here and there you might not particularly respond to favorably, but that is a great volume. I recommend you read it. One hundred and eighty-five times. There are ten different sense of the word "world" in the New Testament. As a matter of fact, John chapter 1 and verse 10 there is a text that has three occurrences of the word "world" and each of the senses is different. Just some time sit down and take a look at it and you will sense, "He was in the world," the habitable world, and what does he go on to say, "He was in the world and the world knew him not." That's not the habitable world. Those are people, what's the rest of the text, "the world knew him not and the world was made by him." You can see there's the physical world, the habitable world, and the unbelieving world; three different sense of the word world in one verse. So to suggest that the term world means everyone always is

just not true to biblical thinking. So here we have the normal unbiased approach is that Jesus Christ gave himself for every single individual being. If so, how can we say that some are lost?

Well, another one of the commentators who has written a book on the atoning work says that "It is actual for those who believe, but potential for others." Now, wait a minute, this is a normal unbiased approach. [Laughter] So "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins:" he is. It doesn't say he potentially is. He is the propitiation for our sins. Normal unbiased approach to insert the word potential or provisional or conditional. Is this the normal unbiased approach? I thought the normal unbiased approach was to read the text as it stands. [Laughter] He is the propitiation for our sins.

Howard Marshall, a genuinely evangelical scholarly interpreter of the word of God says with reference to this that this text sets forth the possibility of forgiveness. He's the possible propitiation. No, he is the propitiation for our sins, not potential, not conditional, not possible, but he is actually the propitiation for our sins. That's what the text says. I find that the normal sense. It's not the normal unbiased sense, but it's the normal sense. I don't want the normal biased sense myself. But that's the normal sense it seems to me.

So if the claims are satisfied what grounds for judgment exists for those who are the objects of the propitiation. If he is the propitiation for my sin, my Christian friend, what reason is there by which God may judge you. If Christ has died for me as I am told even by men who don't believe what I believe, on what grounds can I be judged. On what grounds can heaven hold anything against me if Christ has died for my sins? If he has paid the penalty of them. Just think about it. I think that's a normal approach. It seems to be a normal biased approach to think anything other than that. He is the propitiation for our sins. He has died for us. Our sins have been forgiven. That's not possible my friend, that's a fact for those who believe.

John Owen, I love Mr. Owen, he is so hard to understand. [Laughter] But once you understand his words are so precious. They are so great. I wrote a little article on substitution. It's in the book over here. It's just been published by Moody. And in it I labor some of these points, particularly with reference to some of the questions today, and I have a word concerning Clark Pennick, because Dr. Pennick is a nice man, but he's been drifting for a long time. He's drifting and drifting and now he's drifting into what is now a belief in the governmental theory of the atonement and many other ways in which he has drifted. I do mention his name in it.

But I mention the fact that when I was at Dallas Theological Seminary and being taught by Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, a man that I loved, I look forward to seeing him in heaven. He was a man of faith. Imagine a man today establishing an institution and believing that you would never have to send out a single letter of solicitation of funds. I call that practical faith. I don't know of any institution, there may be some little one. I don't know of any institution other than China Inland Mission and a few like that who have done that through the years. And you may not realize it, many of you, but those of us who have been in Christian work for a long time know that George Mueller has a bad name today. Do you know why? He has a bad name because he didn't appeal for funds.

And really individuals try to find some way in which they can trip up Mr. Mueller in order to justify what they have been doing, and one of the most interesting was this one. At the end of the year he sent out a letter of thanksgiving for people who had given money without solicitation. That's really a kind of secondary solicitation isn't it? To say thank you. Well, I know when I began the ministry of the word of God I was with a group of people, they didn't believe in solicitation. We don't believe in solicitation at Believers Chapel. We've never had an offering where the public is there, the believers are given an opportunity, but we warned them over and over, "If you're not a believer don't put money in that collection plate. It won't advance you one step toward heaven. But if you appreciate what's been done for you, you're free to put an offering in the collection

plate." But in the morning when we have two or three times we have around the Lord's Table we never pass the offering. People come in and wonder sometimes "Where was the offering?" Some look at back because some churches have done that to start, "We have the offering plate in the back." We don't even have that; we just look to the Lord.

We're solvent. We're solvent. We have nine hundred thousand dollars in the bank. We're getting ready to add an addition to the building. I'm not involved incidentally, so I'm not talking about what I have done. But they're getting ready to add an addition and they want to pay for it. Think of that, pay for it. [Laughter] I don't have anything against borrowing money if you can justify from your cash flow that you can pay for things. That's all right. But I like it when you can say, "We want this and here's the money for it." [Amen] I just think that honors the Lord. So my friend who doesn't like George Mueller says that Mr. Mueller violated those principles by sending out a letter after the year was over thanking the individuals who had given money the previous year without solicitation. I like to say to someone who argues like that, I say, "Okay, Mr. Mueller violated it. But after all it wasn't a bad principle was it? Would you try it? Would you try it?"

John Owen we were talking about, Mr. Owens' conundrum. I wrote this little article on substitution and I said with reference to Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, I loved him. He taught me a whole lot about grace because he lived what he believed. And with us beginning theological students that didn't know much, it was like talking with the thirteenth apostle. I sat in front. I was as close to him as you are right there and I would be right there to listen to Dr. Chafer. And he had a wide experience, but he didn't have a good training. His training was in evangelism and Bible teaching. So far as I know he had never had a theological class in his life. I saw his library. He built up a good library buying books. His favorite theologian was Ralph Wardlaw. He liked Hodge. He liked Shedd. But he never had the kind of skills that gave him the perception that a trained theologian would have, but a godly man.

I wrote in the article with reference to substitution that Dr. Chafer spoke about the Calvinist and me, which I would become, I didn't realize where I was headed. But he spoke about me and my strained interpretations. More than once Dr. Chafer in his section on soteriology spoke about the strained of the Calvinist, you people, strained interpretation. And then he said after he finished accusing us of strained interpretations, he said, "But how it is that Jesus Christ should die for the sins of the whole world and men should be judged for their sins is a mystery and has not been explained at the present point." [Laughter]

Well, I wrote a little note and said, "Oh what I would have given to have John Owens' conundrum. When the work went up to Moody Press a fellow wrote me back and said, "What's John Owens' conundrum?" one of the editors. So I pointed him to Owens's conundrum. The Father imposed his wrath due unto and the Son underwent punishment for either all the sins of all men, all the sins of some men, or some of the sins of all men. In which case it may be said that if that last be true, some of the sins of all men, all men have some sins to answer for, and so none are saved. That if the second be true, all of the sins of some men, the Christ in their stead suffered for all of the sins of all of the elect in the world and this is the truth, not normal unbiased but just truth. But if the first be the case, all the sins of all men, why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins? You answer, because of unbelief. I ask, is this unbelief a sin or is it not? If it be, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or he did not. If he did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which he died? If he did not he did not die for all their sins. That's an unanswerable argument. You'll find it in the tenth volume. You'll find some jewels in that tenth volume. Just read through that tenth volume, dream through parts of it [Laughter] but pay attention in parts of it. You'll really love it.

There are some men who have written theories of the atonement that are very popular. Who have acknowledged in footnotes, while they take another viewpoint, if

Owens' presuppositions are correct it's an unanswerable argument. It is an unanswerable argument for his presuppositions are correct. So "He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world." This ethnological view, it's been called, satisfies. Thinking of Diaspora Judaism in mind for that's where John probably was. And so consequently that, I think, is what John means. Otherwise we might have a universalism that is contrary to Scripture or we have God who tries to convert everyone but is frustrated in his purposes. The texts of Scripture such as Isaiah 46:10 and various other passages speak of the fact that we have an unfrustratable deity. It's something I cannot imagine a person believing. That God would try to do something and not be able to accomplish it. And so the intent of the atonement, if it's universal, and that is not the result, means we have a frustratable deity, and I cannot accept that. The substitution is then not effectual if it really is a substitution for all that Jesus Christ accomplished, then all would be free of sin. Toplady would be wrong, "Payment God cannot twice demand, first from my bleeding shirt his hand and then again from mine."

There's a famous illustration. I don't think I've got time to do that. He wants those illustrations. There's a famous illustration of the Peruvian Pizarro found in one of the little works that I've read, George Bishop's work, *The Doctrine of Grace*. And in it he relates the story of a Peruvian Inca. The story is told of this Pizarro, Francisco Pizarro, you'll find him in the encyclopedias. He lived in the 15th and 16th century. That when he had imprisoned the Peruvian Inca, that was the king of the Quechuan peoples of Peru maintaining an empire until the Spanish Conquest under Pizarro, when he had imprisoned the Peruvian inker, that monarch lifting his hand to the level of his head in the wall of a room, said that if he could provide Pizarro with gold that high all over the room, if he could fill it all over the room would he free him, counting upon the Peruvian people to do that, which is according to Mr. Bishop's story what happened. And so the people did fill the apartment with silver and gold to that particular level in the hopes and in the promise that he would set him free.

Pizarro agreed to do this, and then when the loyal subject of the Incaba denying themselves to the utmost had brought together the requisite ransom. Pizarro led forth their beloved inker and before their smiling exposed faced put him to excruciating death. Mr. Bishop says, "That Pizarro lifted and broadened to infinite proportions is the shadow which a universal atonement projects upon God. It makes an infinite Pizarro and subverts the very substratum upon which is built his throne. Christ paid it all but did not gain that for which he paid the price." So I wrestled with these things at theological seminaries. I told you last night it was my task for many years to teach the exegete of the New Testament. No other seminary had the emphasis upon the languages that the Seminary had in those day. Dr. Chafer, he didn't have Greek. He wanted everybody to have what he didn't have. So they had five years of Greek. Every student had to read the Greek New Testament through while he was in the seminary, beginning in Matthew going all the way through. And now here I was exegeting these passages in the various classes and I would come to those texts like this, and I had exegetical ledger domain that very few people ever had. I could answer, I thought, all of those questions except the big question, you know. How is that if Jesus Christ has paid for the sins of everyone, how is that they can be judged? How is it that they are not free? And finally by the magnificent grace of God it penetrated a very hard head, and I began to see what Scripture says. I have no feeling but the greatest thanksgiving to God for what happened to me.

Let me just end on a note of agreement, namely that the only way of reconciliations is by Christ's propitiation. There's no better time incidentally if you are not a believer in him to come to him at this very moment and believe in him, trust him. That's what the Scriptures say is the term upon which we receive the benefits of Christ's death. I don't want you to think about John McArthur and Zane Hodges when I say this. Just think about Paul, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." If there's any question about it, remember that John Calvin adds in his exposition, "Believe," he says it's a simple term but he says it's ample, ample, believe. What does believe mean?

Well, notitia, assensus, fiducia; it has to do with knowledge, assent, and a trust. That's simply the term upon which we receive the benefits of the saving work of Jesus Christ, believe it. Believe that message. In that sense give assent to it, know it, and trust the one who has made the payment. Candlish is right, "No sinner, no sin is beyond the reach of that great atonement, let the restless foe accuse, the advocate has answered with his blood." That's John's view, I think, of the atonement. He says much more in the fourth chapter but essentially that's what he believed.

May I lead in prayer now.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee and thankful that our great Savior has come and has paid for the sins of sinners such as we are. We thank Thee for a gospel that we may offer to sinners, and we thank Thee Lord for the assurance that the Holy Spirit touches the heart of sinners and brings them to the knowledge of him whom to know is life eternal. We thank Thee. We thank Thee for this group...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]