



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

TRANSCRIPT

Romans 1:1-7

“The Jesus That Paul Preached and The Issues of Life”

[Audio begins] For our Scripture reading this morning we are turning to Romans chapter 1 and beginning at verse 1 and reading through verse 7. Now I am not beginning a series of messages on the Epistle to the Romans, but we want to consider one of Paul’s unusual statements contained within this introduction. So will you turn with me now to Romans 1 and let’s read this opening salutation and greeting to the church in Rome,

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. (I want you to particularly notice verses 3 and 4) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; (and appointed would be a better rendering of the Greek word here) appointed the Son of God with power, according to a

spirit of holiness, by the resurrection (or perhaps from the time of the resurrection) of the dead.”

May God bless this reading of his Word, let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful for the Scriptures and for the wonderful way in which they speak to our needs. We thank Thee that they comfort us in our tribulations. They strengthen us in our weaknesses. They enlighten us in our difficulties and in our puzzlements, in our perplexities. They give us guidance as the Holy Spirit applies them when we want to know the next step to take. We thank Thee that it is through them that the Holy Spirit brings men to Jesus Christ, and sanctifies them and prepares them for the meeting with our Lord in the air to which we look forward. And so Lord, we thank Thee for the holy Scriptures and we know that they cannot be broken. We thank Thee too for all of the other blessings that have come to us through the message contained within them.

We especially today thank Thee for the Holy Spirit and for the way in which he has come into our lives and continue to reveal Jesus Christ to us. We thank Thee for the life that he implanted, the faith that he brought, for the instruction in the Scriptures that he constantly gives, and for the way in which he molds us and makes us like Jesus Christ. And we pray that we may be submissive to his ministry, yielded to his forming. And may, through his work, we be conformed to him who has loved us and given himself for us. And so Lord, we pray Thy blessing upon each one present. We pray that this ministry may be an experience of the lives of each of us. And we pray for our world in which we are living. We especially Lord, today pray for those whom Thou hast sent forth into far away places, difficult places, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray that Thou wilt strengthen them, encourage them. May today Lord, if it please Thee, be a great day for

the church of Jesus Christ. And now we commit this meeting to Thee, and the meetings of this day and ask for Thy blessing through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Message] Subject for this morning is “The Jesus that Paul Preached and The Issues of Life.” Fundamental to the issues of the soul and life is the identity of Jesus Christ. Who is this puzzling mysterious and awe inspiring figure of human history? To Tim Rice, and Lloyd Webber, in their very, very popular Broadway rock opera, “He’s a man, he’s just a man. He’s not a king. He’s just the same as anyone I know.” Others have other views of Jesus Christ. Lord Beaverbrook spoke of him as the great propagandist. Joel Carmichael, with no flash of prophetic genius whatsoever spoke of him as a Jewish revolutionary. Gunter Born Cong, a disciple of Bultmann, has spoken of Jesus along these lines; he has said concerning him that as far as he has seen him, he is a human tool by which God confronts men. Some of our radical theologians have spoken of Jesus as the uniquely free man, the man for others, or the fall guy in the profane world.

It’s a very striking thing about Jesus of Nazareth. He, although he has been called all of these names which are far away from what he really was, he nevertheless in 1971 is a man who commands the attention of our world. There are thousands of people who take the position, and among them religious people, that Jesus Christ was just a good man. But there is one difficulty with this. W. E. Sangster said once, and I think correctly, “An infallible mark of a good man is that he has a keen sense of guilt. The better he is the more he is conscience of his own failure.” And by unanimous testimony Jesus Christ was a good man. But strikingly he had no sense of guilt. It was he who said, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” and no one came forward to convince him of sin. And so, he was a good man but he had no sense of sin. Strange, the truth of the matter is that Jesus Christ was more than a man. He was a good man by all evaluation, but he had no sense of sin. He was more than a man.

Well more than a man, why that's the claim that Jesus Christ made of himself, and that's the claim that the apostles have made of our Lord. For example, in the gospels he accepts the worship of men. On the Sea of Galilee, after Peter has walked on the water and our Lord has walked on the water and they have walked back to the boat together after Jesus has saved Peter, they who were in the boat fell down to worship him, and he did not say, “Now do not worship me I'm only a man.”

Furthermore, he forgives sins. To the man who was brought in who had the palsy, he said that, “You may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. I say unto thee, Rise and take up thy bed and walk.” He forgives sins.

Not only that, but Jesus Christ is the supreme revealer of truth. And the things that he knows are remarkable indeed. It is he for example, who says, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father?” That is, without your Father knowing it, now how did he know that? But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Now how did Jesus Christ know that? And let me assure you, the hair styles of 1971 pose no problem for the omniscience of God. He still knows all the hairs of your head, increase them as you will.

And not only that, he not only knows all the hairs on our heads, but in the 18th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew we read Jesus said, “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” Now how did he know that?

And finally, when Jesus was betrayed and arrested he said, after he had told Peter to put his sword back in the scabbard, he said, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” How did he know that? You see Jesus Christ is more than a man because he accepts the worship of men, he forgives sins, and he is familiar with the scenery of the invisible world. Well if Jesus Christ is more than a man then what he teaches about the issues of the soul must be authoritative and final.

Now the Apostle Paul was a man who preached Jesus Christ and he described the Jesus that he preaches in one of his slighted but classic statements. Bousset has called Romans 1:1-7 the monumental introduction to the Epistle to the Romans and so for this morning we turn again to the book that led Augustine to the Lord, that led Wesley to the Lord, through which Wesley’s heart was strangely warmed, that led Daubeney and others to the Lord, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.”

Well it was the winter of A.D. 54 or 55 or thereabouts, in Corinth, the vanity fair of the ancient world, the Paris of the ancient world. And two men were sitting on the balcony of Gaius’s house in the city of Corinth and they were looking out over the city of Corinth. And they were amazed by the manifest signs of the evil and wickedness by the men of their generation. And it is out of this situation that these two men, one of them an elderly man in his late fifties, the Apostle Paul, and the other man by the name of Tertius, probably a younger man, his amanuenses or secretary. And Paul began to dictate to him a letter to the church at Rome.

It’s very striking that this Jewish man, Paul, should say of himself that he is a servant of Jesus Christ, because you see being a Jewish man and being well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, he knew that the term servant of God, or servant of Jehovah was a term that was revered as the highest title that a human being could have in the Old Testament. The prophets of the Old Testament were called the servants of Jehovah, and Jehovah himself called them that. Abraham was called the servant of God. Moses was called the servant of Jehovah. David was called the servant of Jehovah. And now this man who is a Jew, who is well acquainted with the Scriptures, who is advanced in Judaism beyond any of his contemporaries, he proudly designates himself a servant of, not Jehovah, but Jesus Christ. It seems obvious that though a Jew, and though acquainted with all that the Old Testament has to say about servants of God, Paul is perfectly satisfied to be called the servant of Jesus Christ because you see his view of Jesus Christ was such

that he saw no distinction in majesty and dignity between Jesus Christ and the Jehovah of the Old Testament. “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ” and I think he must have sung that. “Called to be an apostle” an apostle by calling, we might better render it. In other words, my apostleship my office that I hold is one that I hold because I was called to it. I was called supernaturally. That is, the character of my apostleship, it is an apostleship by calling. Like Abram, a servant of Jehovah in the Old Testament, he was called from heaven. The God of glory appeared to Abraham, the God of glory appeared to Jesus Christ. And so all that Paul said he said out of the sense of having been called by God.

It seems to me that that is the basic relationship that every preacher in the 20th Century should know and realize. He does not preach out of a sense of having studied the Scriptures, though that of course would be great. He does not speak out of a sense of a feeling that he should speak for God. He does not speak out of a sense of, “Well, many people have told me that I might make an excellent minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” No, he speaks out of his sense of calling. And too many today do not have that calling as is evident by the ministry that proceeds from their mouths. Jeremiah said, “I have not sent these prophets yet they ran. I have not spoken to them yet they prophesied.”

And that always reminds me of the story of the black preacher who was an excellent minister of Jesus Christ and who had the opportunity to listen to a brash young preacher who was very sure of himself, but who displayed little evidence of the power and life of God in his preaching. And when the message was over the older man went over to the younger man and he said, “Was you sent or did you just went?” [Laughter]

Paul says, “Called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.” Now after having spoken of himself as the author in the 1st verse, he now gives us his subject and it’s the subject of the Epistle to the Romans. It has to do with the gospel, “separated unto the gospel of God.” and so when Paul mentions gospel of God that demands an expansion. And so he launches into this lengthy expansion, it’s typical of Paul but it is

quite different from the letters of ancient times. They usually began, “Paul, to you in Rome, greeting.” That would be the normal thing, but he has mentioned gospel and so that launches him out into an expansion and he speaks of the roots of it first. He says, “which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy writings.” And so when we turn to the Bible, and particularly the New Testament and the gospel of Jesus Christ, we say and we often say this is good news. This is the kind of news that really is exciting. But let me assure you it is not new news. That’s what Paul is saying. It is good news, but it is not new news. It was promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures. Luther says that this gospel did not arise by accident, it did not arise by some way in which the stars have come together in conjunction, but it has risen out of the determinate council of God. And so, Paul says this gospel which he had promised before by his prophets in the holy Scriptures. Now that launches him into the content of it, concerning his Son, Jesus Christ.

Now we must stop for a moment and say a word about this because this is extremely important. The gospel concerns his son. What does the term Son of God really mean? Well let me give you a little theology. This term refers to the theanthropic, second person of the Trinity. He is the second person of the trinity, but he has taken to himself a human nature. And so he is different from the other members of the trinity, in that he is not only completely God but he is also completely man. He is God’s Son. Now he was God’s Son before he took to himself human nature. Isaiah says, “Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given.” You see the Son existed before he was given to us. The child was born in the manger in Bethlehem. That was the beginning of the child, but the Son is the eternal Son. Now as Paul speaks of him here he’s speaking of him as the theanthropic person. That is, not only as the eternal Son but as the eternal Son clothed in human nature. He has taken to himself an additional nature. And so he is not only possessed of a divine nature but a human nature. He is the Son of God, the theanthropic person, eternal, and yet also man. And did you notice that when he mentions the gospel

he says that this gospel concerns his Son Jesus Christ. So to move one step from Jesus Christ is to withdraw from the gospel according to God. We cannot say we are preaching the gospel if we do not preach Jesus Christ. Now if you're a perceptive reader of the newspapers you will notice that very frequently gospel is mentioned by religious people, but it is most often separated from Jesus Christ. Gospel is anything that a preacher in a protestant church might say on Sunday morning at 11:00. Not so, not so at all. The gospel concerns God's Son Jesus Christ.

Now having said that, Paul of course, again, as is his custom, must say something about God's Son, and so he says he was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and he was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. Now this I think is one of Paul's great statements, but unfortunately it has been neglected because it is difficult. And I must say it is difficult. Luther said, “So far as I know no one has ever adequately interpreted this passage.” Then he went on to give us the adequate interpretation, but only for himself. There are three obvious antitheses. If you will look at the text you can see that.

The first is the antithesis between the words “made” and the words “declared,” “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power.” Now made of course is a word that refers ultimately to our Lord's human nature. He came to be of the seed of David according to the flesh. He entered human existence by birth. He was born of a woman who came; he came to be of a woman. That is what Paul is speaking about. Now when he says that he was “declared to be the Son of God with power” he is speaking of his appointment to Messianic office. Now that will be developed. So in a sense he is talking about two stages of our Lord's existence. He is talking about the stage of his existence before the cross when he came to be of the seed of David according to the flesh when he entered into human existence, when he became a man. But in a moment he will talk about how he, through the resurrection, was manifested the Son in

power. And of course through the resurrection he has come to be fully as God intended him to be, a risen Messiah. And so he is appointed Son of God with power. Always Son of God, but appointed Son of God with power by virtue of his experience of death, burial, and resurrection.

Now the second antithesis is the antithesis of “seed of David and Son of God.” I think it should be obvious to us that “seed of David” must be a reference to the Davidic son ship of our Lord, which stresses of course his human nature as well as his royal character, because David’s son was said to be, prophesied to be, the reigning king to come. And so this is a great messianic term. He was made of the seed of David, Davidic son ship. And then the second part of the antithesis is “Son of God, appointed Son of God.” And so on the one hand Davidic son ship, on the other hand divine son ship in the power of the resurrection. Both are part of the gospel. One, one stage of his existence, the other the other stage of his existence, but implicit also is the fact that our Lord is of two natures. He is a man. He is son of David according to the flesh. He also more than a man, he is Son of God.

Now we must stop here, because when we mention man and God, we immediately have problems, because we are human beings. We are only men, we do not know God. We do not know God in his fullness. We know him as a person through faith in Jesus Christ. And I know him as well as I knew my father, as well as I know my mother. But just so as I did not know completely my father, or completely my mother, so I do not know God completely. I know him, but I don’t know him completely. I my wife, but I don’t know her completely. And she knows me and she does not know me completely, so she says often. [Laughter]

Men can have two forms of consciousness, yet with only one self consciousness. Now we know this experience. We can feel cold with our body, and yet we can at the same time pray to God with our minds. We may go into our rooms when they are cold, get down upon our knees, lift our voice to God and speak with God, but at the same time

our feet are chilly. Now these two forms of conscious experience are wholly diverse and distinct. I do not pray with my body and I do not feel cold with my mind. Now this doubleness and distinctness however, is part of one self consciousness. I do not know myself as two persons when with my mind I speak to God, or my spirit, and at the same time when I feel cold in my feet I say, “I am talking to God” and I say, “I am cold” at the same time. And so there is one person who is the subject ego of these experiences.

At the very time that Jesus Christ was conscious of weariness and thirst by the well of Samaria he was also conscious that he was the eternal and only begotten Son of God, the second person in the trinity. And that is proved by his words to the Samaritan woman. Remember he said to her, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. I that speak unto thee am the Messiah.” And so the consciousness of fatigue and the consciousness of thirst came through the human nature of his person, but the consciousness of his omnipotence and supremacy comes through the divine nature in his person. If he had not had a human nature he could not feel fatigue or sense thirst. If he had not had a divine nature he could not feel and sense properly his supremacy over men. But because he had both natures in one person he could have both. He is son of David according to the flesh. He is Son of God in power according to the resurrection.

When he was in the boat on the Sea of Galilee the Scriptures say they took him as he was into the ship. He was tired. In fact he was so tired that he immediately fell asleep. And he fell asleep amid the crashing of the thunder and the flashing of the lightning, a storm that even fisherman who were acquainted with the Sea of Galilee became terribly afraid in. So it must have been quite a storm, but our Lord slept like a baby in the midst of the storm until finally they became so afraid that they rushed to him in the stern of the boat where his head was on the pillow that the helmsman usually sat on, and they roused him up and said, “Master, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?”

and he arose and he rebuked the wind and he rebuked the sea and there was a great calm. And on the one hand we have the son of David according to the flesh, the man, sleeping like a baby, tired from the day's labor. On the other we have the Son of God in power, possessed of divine nature who can speak to wind and waves and have them obey him. No wonder the apostles were amazed and fearful, “What manner of man is this that even winds and sea obey him?”

I like the way Jesus Christ pays taxes, doesn't cost him anything. You remember when Peter was speaking with one of the Romans and they were saying, “Does your master pay the poll tax?” and Peter, speaking as he so often did without thinking, said, “Why of course.” And when he came home Jesus rebuked him and said, “Peter, what did you do?” And Peter told what he did and he said, “Now Peter, do kings pay taxes?” “Oh no, they are exempt.” “Well Peter you should have known that I'm exempt. But in order that we may fulfill our duties so no one will think evil of us Peter I want you to go over to my Sea of Galilee, because you see, I've had one of my creatures drop a coin into the midst of that sea and I've had one of my fish come and by the application of my law of gravity that fish has been able to tip that coin in it's mouth and I want you to go over and just throw your line out and my fish is going to catch hold of that hook and when you bring that fish up take the coin out of it's mouth and pay your taxes.” Now, what a human thing it is to pay taxes, but what a divine way of paying them. Wouldn't it be nice if we could pay our taxes that way? Fish a while, and bring it up out of the sea. And so our Lord is the son of David, but he's Son of God in power from the time of the resurrection. Someone said, “Spiritual resurrection or bodily resurrection?” C. S. Lewis said it was “little as broiled fish” thinking of the fact that he fed the apostles with broiled fish after his resurrection.

Now the third antithesis is the one that is probably the most difficult. Paul says that he was made “of the seed of David according to the flesh,” but “declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the

dead,” according to the flesh, according to the Spirit of holiness. What does he mean? According to the Holy Spirit, some commentators have sought to say, that the spirit of holiness is the Holy Spirit. It’s striking. If that were so, out of many, many references to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament that would be the only place in which the Holy Spirit is referred to as the “spirit of holiness.” Is this a reference to the divine nature, some of our theologians, because we have the human nature to clearly referred to in verse 3 have sought to see in verse 4 only a reference to the divine nature and so they have said the “spirit of holiness” must be the divine nature, some of our good theologians. I do not think that is really what Paul means. I think if he had intended to say that he would have said it more plainly. It seems to me that since he uses the term “spirit of bondage” in this same epistle as a disposition of bondage when he says the “spirit of holiness” he speaks about the disposition of holiness that existed within our Lord. When it was prophesied that he would be born the angel said, “That holy thing shall be called the Son of God.” The thing that characterized our Lord Jesus Christ from the time that he was born was that holy dedication to the will of God.

Put it this way, it is his holy obedient disposition which marked everything that he did here. And it seems to me that Paul’s words in Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 through 11 are the clearest exposition of what Paul has in mind here. And there you’ll remember he begins by saying that Jesus Christ was in the form of God but he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He made himself of no reputation. He took upon him the form of a servant. He was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It is his holy obedience, even unto death, that is the spirit of holiness that dominated him. And so the stage of humiliation gave way to the stage of exaltation. And so while he is according to the flesh the son of David, he is according to his holy obedience Son of God with power from the time of the resurrection.

Now you can see that in our Lord's history he has moved from his eternal son ship through the taking to himself of the human nature of men from thus Messiah ship to ultimately Lordship over all. And so that Jesus Christ according to Paul is the eternal Son who has taken to himself human nature has entered into his messianic office, has by the resurrection been demonstrated to be Lord of all. That's why Peter and the others say, “He has made this, same Jesus whom he hath crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” And then again in the 10th chapter when he's speaking in Cornelius' house he inserts he is “Lord of all.” And so we have the one who is the eternal Son, who has become man, who has become the Davidic Messiah, who has through his holy obedience undergone the sacrifice of the cross, and now has ascended to the right hand of the Father and there he is the universal Lord of all. This is the Jesus that Paul preaches. And you know in the Greek text, it's not in the English text, those words concerning his Son, “Jesus Christ our Lord,” those four words, “Jesus Christ our Lord” are not at the beginning of verse 3 they are at the conclusion of verse 4, “And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Jesus Christ, that is the human person who is the Messiah, the anointed one, but who has now by reason of his cross work become the universal Lord of all, Jesus Christ our Lord. That's the Jesus that Paul preached.

Now Paul tells us the aim of this gospel in verses 5 and 6 he says, “by whom we have received the grace of apostleship,” that is from this risen universal Lord we have become his apostles “for obedience to the faith among all nations in his name among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.” Faith obedience is the aim of our preaching and it is not that men should be saved primarily. It is for the glory of his name. My dear friends, God is not merely so much concerned about your salvation as he is about the glory of his name.

Now then, Paul speaks to the addressees in verse 7. He says, “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father.”

Now why did you tack on those words "Lord Jesus Christ" Paul? Why Paul would have answered, "Grace." Jowitz said, "Grace is holy love on the move." Grace and peace, confident access to God, why these come from a common source, they come from God our Father and they come from our Lord Jesus Christ. These two persons stand on common ground. There is God our Father and there is the Lord Jesus Christ. They are members of the same trinity of divine beings, divine persons, one great divine being.

Now, why is all this important? My goodness, all that theology, this early in the morning? Yes, all that theology this early in the morning. The day will be better for it. Why is this so important? Why my dear friends, this is so important because the attitude that we have to Jesus Christ determines the attitudes and issues of the soul. As a matter of fact, the attitude that I have to Jesus Christ determines the issues of life. It was our Lord who said there is one who is your master, Christ.

And so let's just think for a moment. If Jesus Christ is the Lord, then he must be the Lord in all the realms of my life and he must be the Lord in all the realms of my thought. And so I say to myself, "Well now what shall I think about the Scriptures?" My dear friends, I shall think about the Scriptures the same thing that my Lord thinks about the Scriptures, for if he is truly the Lord Jesus Christ then what he says about the Scriptures is authoritative for me. And he says the Scriptures cannot be broken. He regarded them as inspired of God. He regarded them as verbally inspired of God. He regarded them as plenary inspired of God. He regarded all of the Scriptures of the Old Testament and each of the Scriptures of the Old Testament as having come from God. They were authoritative for him. And if he is the Lord Jesus Christ they are authoritative for me. And so what he believes about the Scriptures I shall believe.

What shall I believe about sin? Shall really believe that men are sinners and under sin? Yes I shall believe that men are sinners and under sin because my Lord believes that men are sinners and under sin. It is he who said, "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts to men," you see our Lord regarded men as being evil, and so I shall believe

that men are evil, because my Lord believes that men are evil. And if I want to know what sin is I ultimately come to him. By the way, if I want to know what sin is I do not go to the courts in which our felonies are tried, our courts of justice. If I want to know what sin is I do not go to our prisons. If I want to know what sin is I do not go and speak to the District Attorney. I'm sure he can give me some good ideas about the sin of the human race. And I'm sure that he can tell me things about human sin and its ramifications that I never dreamed of.

But if I want to know about sin I do not go to him. If I want to know about sin I do not go to the great masters of literature like Shakespeare or George Elliot or Stevenson, in whose characters the habit of sin and the torments of remorse almost beyond other writers. I will not go to certain homes in which sin has come in and destroyed all of the mirth and joy and happiness that once was there. I will not go, even if I could, to the secret chambers of your mind and your imaginations, for if I could even know your thoughts I would not know everything about sin. I wouldn't go to the dark realm of the impenitent and lost souls in hell, because while I could learn some things about sin there I would not know its essence. My dear friends if I want to know what sin is I go to the cross of Jesus Christ, for there all of the tempests of divine judgment met in the condemnation of the holy Son of God and God made him under the judgment of sin cry out, “My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken me?” That's where I learn what sin is, what sin did to Jesus Christ, my sin, your sin. And so I shall believe about sin what Jesus Christ believed about sin.

What shall I believe about atonement? Shall I preach the moral influence of the atonement of Jesus Christ? Well yes. Shall I preach the exemplary character of his atonement? Yes, he did show us the love of God. But shall I stop there? Oh no, I shall not stop there. I shall go on and preach that it was a penal substitution for men. Why? Because he said the son of men came not to be ministered unto but to “minister and to give his life a ransom for many.” Now if Jesus Christ is Lord and if that is what he said

then I shall believe it. I shall believe in the penal substitutionary theory of the atonement. And I shall stand with Jesus Christ, say what modern theologians may say.

What shall I say about the forgiveness of sins? You know the world can do nothing about sin. The world can tempt you to sin. The world can excoriate you when you have sinned. The world can make it very difficult for you when you have sinned. But for the man who knows what David knew when he said, “All my sins are before me” the world can do nothing. Only God can do something for sin. And in the Scriptures we read that John the Baptist saw our Lord coming and said, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” And Jesus Christ himself has said that he was the ransom for our sins. And so I shall believe in the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ because he believed in the atonement that he would accomplish, “Thou dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its power till all the ransom church of God be saved to sin no more.”

What shall I believe about life after death? Shall I look forward to the future with a question? Well I think I shall look forward to the future with trepidation. I do not think I shall enter into death with perfect confidence, but I'll enter into death and its experience with a great deal more confidence than I would have if I'd never heard my Lord say, “I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live. And he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die, believest thou this.” So I shall believe what Jesus believed about that.

What shall I believe about the church? What shall I believe about the ordinances? What shall I believe about the way it meets? What shall I believe about its programs? What shall I believe about its essential inviolability? Well I shall believe what Jesus believed. In one of the publications of our students at the seminary this past week there was a reference made to a quotation from Karl Heine, a German theologian. And professor Heine said, “The church is like a ship on whose deck festivities are kept up and glorious music is heard while deep below the water line a leak has sprung and masses of

water are pouring in so that the vessel is settling hourly lower though the pumps are manned day and night.” I don’t believe that for one moment. Because you see, my Lord said, “Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” And so I believe that the church shall survive all of its failures, which we readily acknowledge, all of its misfortunes. I believe it shall survive all of its sins, because underneath are the everlasting arms of its Lord. And my dear friends, when we fight against the church of Jesus Christ we are fighting the Lord. Well, Paul has quite a message. How petty and unsatisfying then are the views of modern man about Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all.

What is a Christian? My dear friends, a Christian is a person who confesses him as Lord. He does not realize in his life all that Lordship means while he’s here, but he confesses him as Lord. And he manifests that to some degree in his life.

I have a friend who is a preacher from Montreat, North Carolina. He wrote an article a week or two ago in one of the journals and I read it. At the conclusion he referred to an incident in Alexander’s life. Alexander was as you know, perhaps the greatest military man of ancient history. And there is an old story about a young man who was a soldier in Alexander’s army who was brought in by some older officers before the presence of Alexander the Great. And as he brought before Alexander he was pushed in front of him by the older soldier and the great leader said, “Well now, what has he done?” And the older soldier spoke up and said, “Sir, he ran in the face of the enemy. He fled, he was a coward.” And Alexander looked upon the young man, he was a very handsome young man, and he obviously was impressed by what he saw on his face. And so he said, “What’s your name sir?” He said, “Alexander, sir.” And with that Alexander flew into a tremendous rage. He got up out of his chair. He walked over to that man. He lifted him up by his tunic and he kind of tossed him back to the ground and he said, “Sir, soldier, change your conduct or change your name.”

“The Jesus That Paul Preached and the Issues of Life” by S. Lewis Johnson
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Now we are Christians. We confess him as Lord. And he has a right to see some evidence of that in our lives. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the tremendous revelation which Thou hast given us of God in Christ. Lord, we confess him Lord of all. We desire Lord to think his thoughts after him, his thoughts about the Scriptures, his thoughts about sin, his thoughts about the atonement, his thoughts about the forgiveness of sin, his thoughts about the church, his thoughts about life after death, his thoughts about all of the great issues of life. And oh God, through the Holy Spirit, whom Thou hast given, enable us to render to him a measure of the obedience that he should have. Oh Father, for the glory of Jesus' name...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]