



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 13:36 – 14:11

“The Uncomfortable ‘Only’ ”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading is John 13, verse 36 through 14, and verse 11. And remember in the context our Lord had mentioned the fact that he may be going somewhere. Now this fact has raised some particular questions with those who were in the Upper Room with him and three of them have specific problems, and I'm only going to deal with Thomas's. But Peter has a bit of a difficulty and Thomas has a little bit of a difficulty, and Philip also has a little bit of difficulty with the things that our Lord has said.

And so beginning in verse 36 we read,

“Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake, (one of the interesting things about Peter, of course, is that he is very much like you and me, he had believed. We are wheat: wheat by virtue of faith. But nevertheless there is a lot of chaff that is there with the wheat and so we see the ways in which the chaff is separated from the wheat by our Lord through his ministry. In verse 38,) Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe

also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know, (it's interesting our Lord's optimism with regard to the apostles because Thomas speaks up and says immediately to him,) Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? (You know, the apostles are very much like you and me: we hear things and yet we don't hear things. Why, he has told them he's going to the Father's house, but Thomas immediately responds, 'We don't know where you're going and how can we know the way?' And then the great text I want to lay stress on follows from our Lord,) Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him, (well that's a bit too much for Philip.) Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? (And you can see he's talking about the intimate union that exists between the Father and himself and that's why when we see Jesus Christ, we've seen the Father. And so he continues by saying,) Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake”

Marvelous section of the Upper Room Discourse with marvelous truth and I hope at least as a result of our time together we'll grasp a bit the importance of the statement that is made to Thomas the apostle. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are indeed thankful for the opportunity to gather on the Lord's day. We remember what this day means, it's the day in which we honor him who was raised from the dead on the third day and now has ascended to the Father's house and sits at the right hand of the Father, waiting until this world shall be made the footstool of his feet and all of his elect ones are gathered into the company of the triune God. What a marvelous future the church of Jesus Christ has and we thank Thee for the privilege of meeting. We thank Thee for the faith that Thou hast implanted in our hearts, the marvelous way that Thou hast cared for us. And we pray that we may be useful to Thee in the ministry in which Thou art engaged.

We pray for this church, we pray for its leadership, its elders, its deacons. We pray that Thou wilt sustain them, guide and direct them as they seek to guide and direct us in their oversight of us. And we pray that Thou wilt use this church to honor our savior Jesus Christ. We pray for those who've requested our prayers. We pray for those who are ill or sick or who face difficult trials, we pray Lord that Thou wilt undergird them.

We pray, too, Lord for this church and this outreach and ask that each of us who belong to it may faithfully represent our Lord and savior Jesus Christ in our daily lives with our friends, our family. Give us, Lord, courage to be witnesses who honor the one who has given himself for us. We ask Thy blessing upon this service, upon the hymn that we sing, upon the ministry of the word of God, may our savior be glorified in them. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] I want to speak to you this morning on the topic of The Uncomfortable -- or if you'd like to pronounce all the syllables -- The Uncomfortable “Only”. Only is in quotations: The Uncomfortable “Only”.

Christianity has an uncomfortable only, and the only is simply this: salvation is only in Jesus Christ. It's not in any other person, it's not in any other doctrine, it's in Christianity alone. You remember the texts: “There is none other name under heaven

given among men, whereby we must be saved,” said the Apostle Peter after he had been instructed. Thomas is told in answer to his question, “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh under the Father but by me.” That’s a very uncomfortable only that Christians and Christianity have to stand behind. We have to say there is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ.

I read a book recently called *The Ecumenical Jihad* written by a Roman Catholic in which he pictured a situation in heaven. He said he had this dream -- this man is an evangelical Roman Catholic -- and so he had conversations in heaven with Muhammad, Buddha, I believe he had one with Christ but he was a Christian, he also had discussions with Thomas Aquinas and he should not expect what he said was essentially that all of these people are in heaven, he had discussions with them. They differed, one of them is right and others are wrong, Aquinas is right and the others are wrong, but nevertheless the very idea is revolting to suggest that one would be in heaven through Buddhism, through Mohammedanism, through anything other than Christianity when our Lord and savior, the one about whom the Scriptures speak, says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me.” That’s an uncomfortable only which you must stand behind as a Christian. You must never, never deny that fact. And you have opportunities constantly to do it all day long in the conversations you have in the lives with whom you are thrown, in your work or in your school, or whatever, you’re constantly tempted to trim yourselves just a little bit and say there are other ways. Your conscience will gnaw at you, you will deep down be unhappy, you will realize you have grieved the Holy Spirit. And so we are called upon as believers in Jesus Christ to face this uncomfortable only and stand for what the Scriptures say because in so doing, we are standing for him who is our hope for the future.

Now Christians do fail. The Apostle Peter went right out after this conversation with our Lord and denied him three times. So these are the things that we face as Christians day by day. Well that was on my heart and mind so naturally I turned to this

passage. And in John chapter 14 and chapter 13, verse 36 on into chapter 14, there are three great themes that rise out of the discussion our Lord is having. There is the theme of heaven. In chapter 14, in verse 2, he said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” Let me tell you, my friend, the millennium house cannot compare with our Father’s house in heaven. You know what the millennium house is, don’t you? You’ve seen it in the papers surely. You’re going to attend the auction, aren’t you, with your checkbook and hope to buy. Who wouldn’t want a house with five bedrooms and nine-and-a-half baths? Why would they need nine-and-a-half baths? They really engage in dirty practices constantly, it seems to me. [Laughter] Nine-and-a-half baths for five bedrooms, think of it. But let me tell you, that cannot compare with the mansions which the Authorized Version uses that are ours in heaven.

So that’s one of the themes. The others, the way of salvation, I’m going to lay stress on that so I’ll pass that by for the moment, but in chapter 14, in verse 11, there is the third and that’s God’s character itself. And in chapter 14, and verse 11, in answer to Peter our Lord has said - Peter - Philip -- I said Peter, I meant Philip -- “Philip, I’ve been a long time with you and still you have not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” All of the characteristics, all of the attributes, all of the virtues that belong to the Father in heaven, are our Lord’s attributes and virtues. And he has come in human form, that is with a human nature, in order to demonstrate the total unity that exists between the Son and the Father so far as those attributes are concerned.

Now, for lost sinners, which is what we all were at one time or another, the second of these is the most fundamental; that is, the way of salvation. And our Lord’s statement to Thomas is the one we want to lay stress upon. It’s very exasperating to miss the way, isn’t it? Driving down the highway and without looking too carefully you miss the turn off and immediately you’re in difficulty. And usually it’s embarrassing,

particularly if you have a lady by your side who reminds you of what you've done [Laughter] after you have passed that corner, or course. And I have such, and I'm thankful for her, I love her, I would be way off the mark were it not for her but she keeps after me, and I'm embarrassed from time to time. I remember one time I was particularly embarrassed, I got on the plane in Charleston, I'd flown back and forth to Charleston so many times I knew exactly where that Delta plane was on the tarp. I walked right down, walked right through the way out to the airplane -- this was in days when difficulties are not as they are today -- I walked right out, walked up the steps, went into the plane and was ready to sit down and when a couple of the stewardesses who apparently were just standing around said, "Where are you going?" I said, "Well, I'm going to Atlanta." They said, "Well I'm sorry, this plane is not going to Atlanta, it's over there." [Laughter] And so I had to go out and then walk over, embarrassed, to the other plane and get on after everybody else.

I was reading something the other day in which there were listed certain mistakes that had been made on church bulletins and these interested me: "Don't let worry kill you, let the church help," [Laughter] that was one. Now there are a couple here that might not be useful to cite in audiences such as this so I'll pass them by for another one: "At the evening service tonight the sermon topic will be What Is Hell? Come early and listen to our choir practice." [Laughter] So everyone makes mistakes and these apostles, they made mistakes and we're not surprised. Peter's problem arose from the conviction that knowledge was more important than obedience, he'd just been told the new covenant, and to him knowledge is more important than Christian love. Our Lord had to rebuke him.

He reminded him that the Christian life is composed fundamentally of the knowledge of genuine faith. He calls upon Peter to believe him, trust him, that there is a Father's house to which we are all going and furthermore, that he's coming again. So those are the things that are to encourage Peter. Now in the case of Philip, his problem is

the anxiety of an unenlightened faith and so our Lord tells Philip, “If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father, so don’t be disturbed about what the Father may be like.”

But the one that I want to talk about is, of course, Thomas. There is a remarkable appropriateness of this particular statement, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh under the Father but by me,” because I would guess if I were to ask you in this audience, “Every one of you who confess faith in Jesus Christ, have you ever denied him,” you would probably say, “You would think so, because there have been times in my conversation, in school, as a young person, or in business, or in other forms of activity, I have refused to stand up for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and acknowledge him when it might be uncomfortable.”

When I finished the message this morning a person approached me outside and said, “Just two days ago or just a day ago some Jehovah’s Witnesses came into my yard and knocked on my door to talk to me about their message. And by the grace of God I was able to say to them, ‘Your message is not a Christian message.’” And they had a discussion and he gave a testimony before several people that Christianity was bound up wholly with Jesus Christ. That was very uncomfortable to have to do that, but nevertheless he felt it was necessary to do it. It is necessary for us to do it. We have to learn to do it in the right spirit, a spirit of love, not condemnation, and I think he did from the account of the conversation, but it’s something we have to bear in mind if we are faithful to him in whom we say we have believed.

Now let me look for a moment at Thomas’s request in verse 5, “Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not where you are going; and how can we know the way?” And our Lord gives as his answer that marvelous statement. Now the apostles are of different types of characters as we know. There is Peter; we know the character of Peter. We know John; John was the introvert of the apostles, perhaps, and the great theologian, the one who at the end of the Christian era, the last of the apostles was called *hagios theologos*, the theologian. He was the one who thought perhaps most deeply of the apostles. In

fact, in some sense perhaps even more deeply than the Apostle Paul because it is striking that the early church called John the Theologian and not Paul. Not that Paul was not a great theologian, of course, but it's John. Go back and read the gospel and then the epistles, and then you'll understand something of why John was called The Theologian.

Now Thomas is one of those men who always keep well within the limits of their knowledge. He liked the feel of solid facts beneath his feet, someone has said. Others have said he was a loyal man but a dull man. Well he may have been a dull man, I don't know, but he prompted our Lord to make one of the greatest of the statements of the New Testament. He reminded me when we say that he always kept within the limits of his knowledge, of many of the students that I've had in the past. There are all kinds of students. Those students who think they are sure to “ace an exam”, to use their words, and they're sure to make an A or an A+ and wind up with a C and are very disturbed over that. They just didn't have the material in their heads. And then there are those who come up and hand in the paper and say, “I hope I passed,” when he makes an A+. And they constantly do that, you know. Not just once but, “I hope I pass, that was tough. I hope I done all right,” when deep down within he knows that if there's such a thing as ever acing an exam, I'm not sure there is, that they have aced one at least.

So Thomas was that kind of man and Jesus had said, “I'm going away and Thomas, you know where I'm going and you know how to get hold of me.” Well poor Thomas, he didn't know. At least he said he didn't know. And so he provoked this marvelous statement of our Lord in verse 6, which is really an explanation of what the word “way” means. “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh under the Father but by me.” It's one of the classic statements of the New Testament, particularly important. Not simply because of what it is, but especially important because of who said it. Now if I were to say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh under the Father but by me,” you might think that I'm the kind of person who thinks that the only people who will get to heaven are those who've heard me preach and that wouldn't have

any particular weight with you, would it. If I were to say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh under the Father but by me,” you might say, “Well I know there are two or three people who have come to the Lord through your preaching but to say you are the way, the truth, and the life, no.” This statement is important because of the person who utters it: our Lord Jesus Christ. He’s the one who makes this statement so important. If it were not spoke of him it wouldn’t have any ultimate value unless connected with him in some way.

Now what is meant by, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Actually, we have one word that may be called a figure, “the way”, “a road”. And then we have two statements or two words that are abstract terms, “I am the way, the truth, the life.” You can get in your automobile and ride down the way but you cannot ride down truth or life. So it’s clear right from the statement itself that probably the way is the important statement because Thomas’s question had to do with it in the first place because Thomas had said, “We don’t know where you’re going, how can we know the way?” So our Lord is answering the question, “What is the way?” So that’s the important word: way, truth, and life. But “way” is the important thing. The figures explained are the abstract terms truth and life. It’s the way because he’s the truth and the life, of course, but it’s the way.

And further, to show that the way is the important statement, he says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh under the Father,” to come is to travel all the way so the statement that’s really important is, “The way.” And our Lord says he is the way, he’s the truth, he’s the life. In fact I’d like to just put it this way, analyze it and say he’s the way because he is the truth and the life. And being the truth and the life ultimately he becomes the way to the Father’s house. Are you on it? Is that the way you’re traveling? That obviously is in the background of our Lord’s statement.

Let me say a few other things about this. Our Lord does not say, “I show the way.” He doesn’t even say, “I know the way.” He just speaks positively, “I am the way.” He speaks about truth. He doesn’t say, “I am true,” he says, “I am the truth.” Many

people are true. Solomon had a lot of that which is true about him. Socrates, you could say about these individuals in aspects of their character that they were true. But not any of them could say, “I am the truth.” Incidentally he doesn’t say, “I am truth, I am all truth,” or, “Only the truth,” because there are others who could say that their aspects of truth and life that are theirs too.

But he does say, “I am the truth.” Now the article is important, “The truth.” What does he mean by that? Well he means this is the paramount truth. This is the fundamental truth. This is the truth that if one is to really have eternal life, he must know this truth, “I am the way, the truth, the paramount truth and the life.” And with reference to life he doesn’t say, “I am the living one that is eternal.” He could say he is the living one but he didn’t say that. He doesn’t say, “I am life.” Others live also, you live, at least most of you. Most difficult, I know that’s why you’re listening to a sermon. But nevertheless, you’re there, you’re breathing, and so you’re living. Our Lord says he’s the life.” So he doesn’t say, “I am life,” he says, “I am the life.” The life, that’s the life whereby we may truly live. If a person does not have Jesus Christ’s life he does not really live. Oh, I look at him and I see he’s breathing, he may be smiling or frowning, he may be carrying out the duties that belong to a normal, we say, a normal kind of life, but he’s not really living until he has believed in Jesus Christ. Until that makes a difference with him. “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” the life by which we may truly live.

The thing that is stated back in the 3rd chapter of the Gospel of John is so important. “He believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him.” And then John again, the theologian of the church in 1st John chapter 5, in verse 12, makes the statement, “He that hath the Son, hath life. He that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.” If you do not have the Son you do not have life. Our Lord makes the statement, John the apostle seconds the statement, and your life, if you look very carefully and very deeply, thirds

that fact. You do not have the life if you do not know Jesus Christ as your own personal savior and Lord.

Well to sum it up then, to accept the truth, to receive the life, is then to be on the way. “I’m the way, the truth, and the life.” To accept the truth, to receive the life, is to be on the way. So those in this audience who have responded in acceptance of the truth have believed the gospel message, they’re on the way to the Father’s house. Isn’t that marvelous? That is better than the millennium house, you know. If you had put down three or four million of your capital funds and bought the millennium house you wouldn’t be in a condition that could possibly compare to the person who has title to the Father’s house in heaven.

Now I said when I began that I had some things I’d been thinking about and so in the remainder of the time I want to talk about that fact and it’s the distinctiveness of the way, the uncomfortable only because that’s what this is. That’s what a Christian has to say. He has to say that there is no other system of truth, whatever it may be, has eternal life except Christianity. In other words, a person who confesses that Mohammedanism is a doctrine that’s lost. A person who confesses that Buddhism is his doctrine is lost. A person who confesses any false, even professing Christian systems of doctrine, if it’s not compatible with, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh under the Father but by me,” it’s not Christian doctrine.

Christians have to be individuals who speak the own comfortable only. Neither is there salvation in any other name under heaven given among men except our Lord Jesus Christ. So we are going to heaven to a person, not simply a place. It’s a distinctive place, it’s the Father’s house, it can only be reached by the Lord Jesus Christ. And when a person nods his head when someone who’s not a Christian talks about the future and perhaps life upon this life and the Christian nods his head, let me tell you what really happens. He has rebelled against Jesus Christ. When we acknowledge that there’s another way to God you have simply rebelled against the truth of Jesus Christ. It’s as

plain as that. “I am the way, the truth, the life; no man cometh under the Father but by me.” Have you mastered that text yet?

To rebel against Jesus Christ is to affirm that there are other ways to God. Now I confess that one of the things that made me disturbed by this was a statement attributed to Billy Graham. Now I know Billy Graham personally, I played golf with him, I sat in the same cart with him for eighteen holes. He can preach a lot better than he can play golf. [Laughter] And as a matter of fact, I could play golf a lot better than I play it now. And we also had in our foursome, the pastor of the Highland Park Presbyterian Church. I got to know Billy and I appreciate him, he’s an honest man in the midst of evangelists, not all of whom are honest and so I like Billy very much. I was very disappointed to find this statement attributed to him, if I saw him I would like to ask him, “Did it come from one of your advisors or did it come from you?” This is it, “I fully adhere to the fundamental tenants of the Christian faith, for myself and my ministry,” said Billy Graham, “But as an American I respect other paths to God and as a Christian I am called upon to love them.”

Now the “them” is ambiguous because it might mean, “Love those other paths,” that’s probably not true knowing Billy, it means, “Love those who hold these other views.” But the very fact that we talk about other paths to God, aside from the Christian path to God, means that we have implicitly denied and rebelled against the statement of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I don’t think that that’s what Billy really meant to say but there it was and aside from Billy there are many people who would say that there are other paths to God. When I finish the message this morning someone came up to me, said he’d listen to Bill Moyers the other night and he had made a statement that said specifically that. Moyers was a Baptist minister at one time. It’s not uncommon for people and simple Christians to rebel against our Lord Jesus Christ because they just cannot stand the uncomfortable onlyness of the Christian message. They bring criticism of ignorance, they bring criticism of intolerance, and that is what we have to take. We have to hope that we have an

opportunity to explain that we’re not in tyrant, we’re simply following the word of the eternal God.

Now I have a friend -- I’m still leading up to something -- I have a friend in Pennsylvania, he’s a young preacher, pastor of a church in one of the smaller towns of Pennsylvania. And he had taken this issue to task from some personal experiences. His name is Fred Zaspel [phonetic] he’s pastor of a church that I preached in and I’m to preach in next year as well. He’s talking about the intolerance of the tolerant. That people love to say, “I’m tolerant.” These Christians are intolerant. So Fred [phonetic] says this, he illustrates the necessity of an admission of a form of intolerance in Christianity by the illustration of a medical scientist who finally after much labor found a cure for cancer. Now questions rose in the man who found the cure for cancer, however. Would he now be forced to say that those who had already died might have lived if they had his cure? What about the careers of the physicians and the families of the physicians whose livelihood depended upon the continuation of the disease of cancer, the oncologists and they serve in oncology.

They had been sincere in their work. Will they not, however, feel embarrassed? Would he not by saying that he was right and they were wrong, should he say he was right and they were wrong and he’s found the cure for cancer? Whereby would he appear proud if he said, “I know the cure for cancer,” and if it has been proved he could say, “I have found it.” He sought he counsel of the community leaders and they were outraged. He should be more tolerant of other doctors. Some would even curse and scream if the cancer industry is ruined and if we can no longer have our annual oncology banquet you will be to blame. This is his illustration.

Toleration is a high virtue. So Fred [phonetic] says that they say in his illustration, the scientist finally decided that his cure should not be announced. Others had been sincere in their methods of treatment, and further, many were dependent on the money given for Federal funding of the cure so at the banquet he opted for calling for more

funding. Sound ridiculous? This is the situation that faced the apostles in the Book of Acts. When they knew from our Lord Jesus Christ that they had the cure for eternal death, should they talk about it? Should they give the gospel to people when their very ultimate life depends upon it? Christians say, "Of course we must." Of course we must give the gospel. It's important to give the gospel; it's the word of our Lord. To not give the gospel is to rebel against Jesus Christ. We cannot rebel against Jesus Christ.

Peter went out and denied him three times so it's possible for us to do even more than that. I don't want to do that. I do not want to deny him. I want to have the courage, the spiritual courage, in the crises of my life with my fellow school pupils of business people or professional people. I want to be able to say in the way that the apostles would say, there is one way of salvation, it is only through Jesus Christ. He's the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh under the Father but by him.

Now Fred [phonetic] gave that illustration but then he went on to say we have had an experience of it in our church. His assistant is a man by the name of Carmen Diselo [phonetic]. I happen to know Carmen [phonetic], he's just a young man. He really is an individual who has - was not trained in a theological seminary but an individual who has other types of training but nevertheless works in the church. He is co-pastor of the church and when he was asked by the student baccalaureate committee to speak to the annual baccalaureate service, he agreed. He didn't realize what difficulties he was getting in, however. He had previously shared a message with some of the individuals in the school and the message was a message which he preached as Jesus is the only way of salvation. So when word got out that he was asked to be the baccalaureate speaker, well the administrator approached Carmen, the Christian, and said, "Carmen, you need to tone down your language. Can't you just say instead of Jesus, the Son of God, 'higher power'? Or can you not just say, 'Supreme being'?" In other words, don't make it specific so that it's Christianity. Mind you, baccalaureate service, as you may remember, is a religious

kind of service; that is, it originally was. He wouldn't agree, and so he was removed from the program.

Well, they were advised that the action of the school, of the authorities, was illegal and the Rutherford Institute, a Christian legal organization, felt that if they took it to court they would be certain to win. That he would be free to speak his mind. Well the school then decided that if the matter were going to court they would cancel the service altogether and place the public blame on Carmen for being too much of a bigot, too intolerant, to not preach a message that would be happily be received by everyone no matter what he may believed. In other words, he would be blamed, not they. So rather than be made out to be the grinch that stole the baccalaureate, those were Fred's, Carmen decided to assure the school he'd been [indistinct], he wouldn't press the matter in court so the service went ahead and someone spoke in place of Carmen, school obtained another local pastor without such firm convictions about Christ. He preached a generic message with which all but evangelical Christians were comfortable. In other words, he mentioned the name of Christ, he preached as you might expect someone who doesn't specifically make the point our Lord does that, “I am the way, the truth, the life; no man cometh under the Father but by me.”

Well that's the way it would have ended except the press got hold of it. Now you can be thankful for the media every now and then. I don't want to give it too blanket of approval, but every now and then you can. So they got wind of what happened and when asked Carmen stated what had happened. The administrator as he had promised put the blame on Carmen who was betrayed as intending to evangelize and preach damnation. Further denied that Carmen was ever asked not to speak about Jesus, he also said that even back in the 1930's the local pastors had agreed not to speak about such things at the baccalaureate service but he couldn't offer any proof of that, that was just what he contended. Well that of course makes it even worse because you have a whole

slew of ministers who agree to speak at a baccalaureate but don't have the courage to speak as a representative of Jesus Christ.

So in the name of toleration Carmen and his message were not tolerated. Carmen was labeled unreasonable and intolerant by those who cursed at him for what he might preach. Who is an intolerant? Who is a bigot? Curiously, Fred says several people admitted the truthfulness of the essence of Carmen's faith; that is, that Jesus is the only savior. Indeed they said, “We respect his believes. We do respect that he holds these strong believes. It was just that he should not be so bigoted as to say such things.” So shall I when I get to heaven say, “Lord, why were you so bigoted to say to those apostles, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh under the Father but by me,?’” You know that I wouldn't dare do anything like that.

A public school hosts a seminar in physiology but an admitted religious service and invites a Christian pastor to speak but then requests of him that he not sound like a Christian, he must be only religious. Why couldn't Carmen agree? I'll tell you why he couldn't agree, because he knew something about the word of God and he respected the word of God. He even knew that the apostles when they heard Jesus make this wonderful statement, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” believed it and lived it. Our Lord told them in the 15th chapter just after this that as Christians we can expect to be hated. Why? Because they've hated me and they've hated my Father, so they will hate you.

And my genuine Christians sitting in this audience, you will be also not tolerated very well if you speak out about your faith. And you must remember that that faces you. But what also faces you is that the fellowship of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, and the apostles, and the believing Christian church down through the years, supports you, is with you, and you stand with them. And the hopes that they and you have are hopes that shall be realized ultimately. It's not arrogant, it's not pompous, it's not narrow minded to

say Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; there is no other way of salvation except through him.

There is a statement that I read from Don Carson. he is Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical, the one with the school in Chicago, one of the leading younger New Testament scholars, although he's getting a bit older now but a man of fine reputation among evangelicals. He made a statement in a brief exposition of the Upper Room Discourse about the fact that we were to be hated. This is what he said, “Nowhere is the world's hatred more clearly set forth than in those many people who judge themselves to be liberal. But who are most illiberal when it comes to Christian absolutes. They demonstrate their forbearance and large hearted goodness when they confront diverse opinions, varied lifestyles, and even idiotic practices. But if some Christian claims that Christianity is exclusive as Jesus insisted or that moral absolutes exist because they are grounded in the character of God as the Bible teaches. Or that there is a hell to be shunned as well as a heaven to be gained, the most interpret language is used to excoriate the poor fool.” How true that is. That is very, very true.

How did the apostles respond? Let me read in verse 18 of chapter 5, “And laid their hands on the apostles, put them in the common prison, but the angel of the Lord, by night, opened the prison doors, brought them forth and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to all the people, all the words of this life.” And you may remember, of course, that that is precisely what they did. They left the prison, they went out, they spoke the words of life. And finally Peter and the other apostles answered further criticism and said we ought to obey God rather than men. We ought to obey God rather than men.

You know this morning when I gave this message I was interested in one fact, several people came up to me and said, we have needed that, we have needed to be reminded what is important, that we faithfully stand up for the truth that we say that we believe and undertake to experience, if necessary some of the uncomfoting of the experiences that come from saying, “Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; no one

comes to the Father except through him.” My hope is that if there are any here who have not come that they will come, but particularly for those of us who have come to him, that we will courageously speak the word in the uncomfortable circumstances in which, all of us, will find ourselves placed. In our schools, in our business, and in our professional activity in our personal relationships, it’s sure to come up. May God give us courage to stand for him who gave himself for us. Let’s stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for the opportunity to pen the word of God and to read these remarkable passages that give us our Lord’s statements about what the Christian faith is really like. Give us, Lord, courage. Give us the ability to stand by him as the apostles did in all the experiences of life, the young people in our audience particularly as well as the older ones...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]