



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Genesis 3:1, John 6:44

“The Fall of Man and Human Inability”

TRANSCRIPT

[Audio begins] We are, of course, delighted that we are able to go back on KRLD. And one of the things that we have wanted to do even before this opportunity came up, we had been discussing it, was to have a program for thirty minutes rather an hour. It's much easier to get on some stations if the program is a half-hour long rather than an hour. And we wanted to do something a little different so far as programs are concerned in that we would like to have one with a strong emphasis upon, as I say to you, Christian theology and the issues of our times. So, it will be designed to do in a little bit more substantial way doctrinal teaching of the word of God. For example, the first of our programs will be four studies in answer to the question: "Who was Jesus Christ?"

We've been trying to discuss the question of the name of the program, and we do not have any name yet. If you have any unusual ideas that might be useful for us, we'd be, of course, glad to hear them. Mr. Weaver is going to participate in it. And, of course, the elders are heavily involved, and Howard particularly. And I submitted a few names to Howard yesterday, and he didn't like my names at all. Probably was wise that he didn't. And so, Howard, I have a couple more names. He objected to my names because they didn't really have enough appeal. And so, I'd like to suggest a very simple one, just

"Dallas". [Laughter] I can tell he's not going to like that one. I thought then of "The Dallas Happy Hour." And I can tell he doesn't like that either.

So, obviously we've got to do some more serious work with regard to the name and introduction of the program, but we certainly hope that you will pray for this particular ministry of the chapel. After all, it's your ministry; it's not ours. And we hope that God will bless it, and I hope, and I think others involved in it do too, that it will be a means by which we can reach other areas of the country which do not have one hour programs.

For example, and I'm not sure that they would want our program under any circumstances, I'm not saying that we will get upon them, but we did approach The Moody Station in Chicago. And they have more than one station. And their, one of their objections to our program was that it was an hour long. So, possibly as a result of this, we will be able to have further outreach.

We did have one man who supervises many hundreds of radio programs as a organization pushing them, we did have him say to us, he said it to me personally, if you can get up some half an hour programs, we can put them on a number of stations who frequently call and ask for a filler program. So even just that would be probably useful for us. But we hope that we will be able to have a program that people will respond to, and we may be ultimately able to get it on a number of stations. But we do request your prayers and in any other way that you can help, we would be most happy.

I would like to express my appreciation to those of you who attended during the meetings over the past few days with Ross Rainey. Mr. Rainey was gratified by this response. We were gratified by the response to the ministry of the word, and we appreciate particularly those of you who attended, and those of you also who helped in entertaining the Raineys, Ross and Lilian. We enjoyed having them in our home and found them to be of great spiritual blessing to us. I know that they were to some others of you who entertained them. We thank you for that and for others of you who

participated in the meetings, Mr. McCracken who led the singing on several nights and others who played the musical instruments and still others who worked in other ways, we're grateful to you for that.

The Scripture reading this morning is in Genesis chapter 2 and Genesis chapter 3 and then one text in the New Testament. We are studying, for those of you who are visiting for the first time, the eight most important Christian truths. Now, of course, that has no divine authority, that title. It's simply my selection of the important truths of the word of God. But the one that we're looking at today has to do with the fall of man and human inability. And so we read in Genesis chapter 2 verse 15 through 17 first.

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Now let's turn to the passage mentioned on the program, verse 1 of chapter 3) Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, that your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (That plural term in the Authorized Version that I am reading from probably should be a singular. The word can be rendered either way, of course.)

Now in the New Testament, one text, John chapter 6 and verse 44. John 6, verse 44. These are very familiar, but very important words of the Lord Jesus himself. Speaking

to one of his audiences he said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let's bow together for a moment for prayer.

[Prayer] We give Thee thanks, Lord, for the ministry of the word of God to us. When we reflect upon the greatness of the Son of God and the saving work that he has accomplished in the shedding of his blood, we are most grateful to Thee. We thank Thee for not only that which Christ did, but also the work of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, in bringing home to our hearts the truth concerning Christ and his salvation for sinners. And we thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast in grace brought us to the acknowledgment of him as Lord and to the reception of him as our own Savior. We are thankful and grateful and we give praise and thanks to Thy name.

We thank Thee too, Lord, for the other blessings of life that are ours through Christ, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the provision of all of our needs, the assurance of divine providence that guides and directs and protects and undergirds all of our steps in this life. And we thank Thee for the hope that we have, the hope of the ages of eternity in the communion with the triune God. How blessed we are. We thank Thee, Lord, for the privilege of prayer. And we pray for those whose names are listed in our Calendar of Concern particularly. Minister to them, encourage them and strengthen them and give them, if it should please Thee, that which their hearts desire.

We pray, Lord, for those particularly who are ill and who need the healing touch of the Lord God. Oh God, touch them for Thy glory in accordance with Thy will. We give Thee thanks for our country, for our president, for others who are over us in the political and governmental sphere. We pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ and all believers wherever they may be gathered and in whatever churches they may be found. Bless the ministry of Thy word today. We pray for our elders and deacons and for the

members and friends and the visitors who are here today. Lord, speak to them through Thy word for the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray in his name. Amen.

[Message] We are studying, as I mentioned in the Scripture reading, the eight most important Christian truths. And we have looked at two already, and this morning the third is "The Fall of Man and Human Inability." Perhaps just a word or two for those of you who may not have been here for the two preceding studies, since last week Mr. Rainey was here. It may have caused some of you to forget exactly where we are.

We began with one of the most important of all truths in the Bible, and that is the truth of divine revelation, namely that God has spoken in the Scriptures. And we set out the fact that this was an axiomatic assumption of Christians given by God with such power to believers that we cannot fail to believe.

Now, we laid stress upon the fact that all reasoning is based upon assumptions. We cannot even begin a discussion without assuming certain truths. I mentioned, for example, the laws of thought and said something about them. For those of you who may have forgotten or may not have heard, we invite you to get one of the tapes and listen to that introductory study. We pointed out, or tried to point out, that Augustine crystalized the historic Christian position, putting into God's mouth the words in his work, "Indeed, O man, what my Scriptures says, I say."

Now we contend that that is a fundamental truth, perhaps the most fundamental truth of the word of God: Divine revelation in holy Scripture. It is stated in many ways in the Bible. For example, in the psalms we read, "In Thy light we shall see light." In the New Testament it's illustrated in Paul's ministry to the Corinthians in which he says as he records what he was doing when he was among them, that he did not preach to them in enticing words of man's wisdom. He came to them in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

And he tells us why he preached not in wisdom of men, but in the demonstration of the Spirit's power. He says, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." In other words, if we are looking for assurance and certainty in spiritual things, the testimony of God himself is the most objective and the most powerful testimony that can be given to spiritual truth. And that's what Paul is talking about when he says he did not preach in the wisdom of men. He came to them in the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit that their faith would not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Obviously if our faith rests in the wisdom of men, then ultimately someone will come along who appears to have more wisdom than the one whose wisdom we have trusted in previously. And then our faith is shattered by what appears to be greater wisdom. So ultimately, assurance of the truth of God comes from the objective testimony of God the Holy Spirit. No testimony is stronger than the testimony of God himself and he gives testimony to the truth of his word. That's a simple philosophical approach, but it is grounded in good reasoning, good philosophy and best of all, in scriptural teaching from the word of God.

The second of these truths was divine creation. God has given us a creation. It was a free creation, we said. In other words, God did not have to create. He freely created. He did it in time, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." He created this universe ex nihilo, that is, out of nothing. It was an act of the triune God for his glory, and the result was a creation that was dependent upon him, yet distinct from him. We do not have emanation in the Scripture; we have creation, a creation that has come from the hands of God, dependent upon him, yet distinct. He created the universe. He created male. He created the female. And we are dependent upon him and distinct from him.

We made the statement also that it seemed to us that this was a kind of overture for the main thing that would follow, the overture of the orchestra for the chorus of life

that would come. And so everything that flows from Genesis 2 on is the unfolding of the divine plan. But creation is the first step along the way.

Now I think there can be little doubt about the fact that if we are to have a half a dozen truths that we point out as being extremely important, then what we are to study this morning has to be among them, the fall of man and its consequences. How important it is to have clear views of sin. Sometimes we don't realize, I think in our world at least, how important this is. You cannot understand yourself if you do not understand human sin. You cannot understand your neighbor or your fellow men if you not understand sin. You cannot understand the world of which you are a part if you do not understand sin. You will not be able to understand the Christian faith at all if you do not understand sin. You will not be able to make heads or tails of the Bible if you do not understand sin. In fact, apart from the first two chapters of Genesis which set the stage, the real subject of the Bible, in fact, every chapter of the Bible, is what man does about our sins. Lose sight of this theme, and you lose sight of the Bible at once. So how important then the understanding of sin is when we think about the Christian faith.

Now we have seen Adam and Eve created. "And male and female God created them." He placed them in the Garden of Eden. And first, Moses describes the probation under which they were put. Now in verse 15 through verse 17, which we have read in our Scripture reading, Moses describes some of the details of that probation. Man was created in the image of God. That means that he had a rational nature. He had a moral nature. And he also had a regal position. He was to have dominion over this creation. In fact, the story of the Bible is also the story of how man's dominion over the creation is recovered through the successful saving work of a second man, the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. So, created in the image of God, Adam and Eve are in the garden.

God has made a provision for them that is a model of parental care. Everything is provided for them. There isn't anything that they could have reasonably asked for that God had not provided for them. If we look at those opening statements of these two

chapters and think about the nature of God, we would have to conclude that God is good. That's one of the attributes of the divine being revealed in Scripture. But you would see this from the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, a model of parental care.

They are brought under a covenant of works. Now the term covenant of works is not found. There is a statement in the Book of Hosea which may refer to this particular passage, and there the term covenant is used. I don't want to debate the necessity of the precise term appearing in the Bible because it's not necessary that that precise term be here. There are many concepts that are taught in the word of God which may not have their expression in the precise words by which we describe them. The term trinity is an outstanding example. It's not found in the Bible, but the God who is set forth in Scripture is a trinitarian God.

So when we speak about covenant of works, we're talking about the arrangement between God and man in the garden. And if we were to define what a covenant is, we would see, if we studied this chapter, that the elements of a covenant are found here. So, we'll call it the covenant of works. We could call it the Edenic covenant, and the truth would be precisely the same. Adam was placed under the covenant of works. There was a condition in the arrangement. There was a penalty if he disobeyed, and implicit, a promise of continuance in life if he obeyed. So, he was put under a covenant of works.

Now I suggest that it was a very gracious arrangement. But it is specifically a gracious arrangement that lays the foundation for another covenant head, the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam, who in the final analysis is the only tree of life. So, this arrangement then was an act of a gracious God who put Adam and Eve under the covenant of works requiring only one thing, faith in the word of God. That's all. Believe the word. As Eve expresses it in chapter 3, we may eat of all of the trees of the garden, but of the one tree, we may not eat. How could God have treated them more graciously than he did. But they didn't understand even how graciously they were treated because

in the putting of them under a covenantal head, the first Adam, God made it possible for a second covenantal head to come and recover the damage that was caused by Adam's fall. So, they were placed under probation.

Now secondly, in Genesis chapter 3, we have the description of the fall of man. We do not know from the study of the word of God where or how, perhaps it would be better to say, we do not know how sin originated. We know from scattered statements in Scripture that sin appears to have originated in the angelic world. But how it originated we are not specifically told in the word of God in any kind of detail.

We do know how sin entered this world of which we are a part. The Apostle Paul makes it very plain from Romans chapter 5 and verse 12 when he talks about Adam and the headship of Adam and the headship of Christ in that 5th chapter. The apostle writes in Romans chapter 5 and verse 12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." So sin evidently was in existence before it entered into the human race through the fall in the Garden of Eden. That's evident from the fact that the serpent, obviously a tool of Satan, already is a tool of an evil being. So, sin had its entrance into the world in Genesis chapter 3.

We learn also from this that sin is an intruder in our society. It's not good in the making as some theologians have sought to teach us, that this is primitive life and through the centuries we've been getting better and better, and sin is good in the making. It is not. It is an intruder into our society.

What Moses describes, and of course we are doing this with a great deal of summary of what is found here. You will find in our tape ministry fuller treatments of all of these sections if you are interested in them.

What we have here is the most disastrous dialogue in human history. Notice that it is initiated by the serpent, the tool of Satan. And he asked for a seminar about God. He said, children, let's have a little conversation about God. You'll notice it's in the third person. Very frequently, discussions concerning God take place in the third person. It's

always better to speak of God in the second person, that is, to enter into a hand-to-hand or person-to-person contact with God. When we talk about God, it's legitimate. But when we talk about God, the tendency is to speak in a way in which the necessity of our personal relationship with God is made secondary. So, a little seminar about God in the third person, the serpent suggests.

Now, in the course of this discussion, almost all students of Genesis have noticed the methodology of the serpent. First of all, he questions the word of God. He says, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" And the woman replies, "Yes, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, we shall not eat of that, for God has said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." So the first thing that he does is to question the divine word. That's the beginning of the temptation.

Then secondly, having successfully traversed that, Satan or the serpent, his tool, contradicts the word. "Ye shall not surely die." It's very interesting to me at least that the first contradiction of the word of God has to do with the doctrine of eternal judgment. Isn't that interesting? Today, we often have people speak very disparagingly of preachers who preach about hell, fire and damnation. Well, that's a perfectly biblical topic. In fact, it's a very needed topic. And the Bible is full of just that teaching.

And in case you were to say, well some of those fellows, like the prophets and the apostles, were not totally inspired in everything that they said, were they? We would say they were inspired in what they wrote in Scripture, but it's true they, in the course of their lives, said things that were not inspired. Only God can speak under inspiration all the time. Our Lord Jesus, however, always spoke under inspiration, and it's very striking that in the New Testament, the one who speaks most often of eternal hell, fire and damnation is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. In fact, a strongest word is a word that is found almost entirely on the lips of Jesus Christ. So it's striking, isn't it, that the serpent denies first of all, eternal judgment? "Ye shall not surely die."

But then he has a third step. And his third step is to malign the author himself. In effect, what he has done is to contradict the word of God. And he is aiming, of course, at genocide. Incidentally, the senate just a few days ago ratified the Genocide Treaty. I think a mistake, probably, but at any rate, they ratified the Genocide Treaty. The one who was originally engaged in genocide, in the attempted genocide, was the serpent himself, for he would slay the whole human race so far as its spiritual future is concerned. And the recovery of it, by the Lord God, the recovery of the race from genocide will require ultimately theocide, that is, the sacrifice of the second person of the eternal trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

But I notice when after he has said "You shall not surely die," he engages in what we would call a little bit of well-poisoning. He says, God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God; you will know good and evil. So God doesn't want you to learn his recipes. He doesn't want you to learn his tricks. Why, after all, if you learn his tricks, and if you learn his recipes, then you will be like God. And he wants to keep that authority for himself. So not only has he questioned the word and denied the word, but he's maligned the author of the word.

And Eve is listening. Eve reminds me of a rabbit in the presence of a serpent, mesmerized by the serpent. And so, mesmerized by a devil, listening to a creature rather than a creator, following impressions, not instructions from the word of God, seeking what so many preachers talk about today: self-fulfilment and not the glory of God, she inclined to evil. And within her heart, there came forth the evil that plunged her into what was, were it not for the redeeming work of Christ, ultimate spiritual destruction.

Now of course, she gave to Adam. Nothing happened, incidentally, when Eve sinned. She sinned in her heart. Then from that inclination, there came the volition to take of the fruit. And the volition issued in the action of actually taking it. Nothing happened. But when she gave to Adam and he took of the fruit and he ate, then, if you'll pardon the expression, all hell broke loose because Adam was the covenantal head. And

when Adam sinned, then we read, "Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they saw that they were naked." He's the covenantal head. And so, that's the key point.

And my friend, they have both fallen, but they are both still religious. There are people who identify a right relationship with God with religion. But they are still religious. They believe in the existence of God. In fact, they believe a lot of things about God. And they know a lot of things about God that even you and I do not know. But they are lost sinners. To be religious is not to be related to God.

Now, here is then the enigma of life: The fall of man. What are the consequences? Well, we have talked often in Believers Chapel about the consequences, and so I'm going to do this rather quickly. We have about fifteen minutes, providing I steal three from that clock in the back which is a little fast.

It's difficult for modern man to recognize sin because sin is uncomplimentary. We don't like things that are uncomplimentary. Further, it's difficult for man to understand sin because it's best seen in the context of the holiness of God. And Isaiah, who goes into the temple and sees that vision of the Lord God high and lifted up, is the man who immediately senses the evil and wickedness and sin of his being. And so when man is in the presence of God, he best understands how unholy he is. The holy one of Israel is the one whose very being creates within us the sense of our sin.

When Peter was in the boat with the Lord Jesus on the sea of Galilee, and the great load of fish was taken out of the water, he sensed immediately that he's not in that boat simply with Jesus of Nazareth, but with the Lord God of Israel. And so then he cries out, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." In the presence of God, we learn how unholy we are.

Furthermore, sin today has been secularized. So when we think of sin today, the average American, what does he think about? Well perhaps an offense against society and its customs. An offense against decency usually related to some form of sexual sin or some kind of human violence. But we rarely, if ever, unless we're acquainted with the

word of God, think of sin as an offense against God. Why the very idea would be ruled out of our classrooms. To think of sin as an offense against God is unconstitutional in the United States of America. That's how far we have gone from the teaching of holy Scripture. Sin is an offense against a holy God, that's the essential nature of sin.

Now, if we were to define it, we would say simply that it is unbelief or disobedience of God that leads to self-assertion against God and issuing in acts of immorality. Obviously, if a person denies the first and greatest commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind," you'll not be expected to obey the second, "And thy neighbor as thyself." So, sin then is unbelief or disobedience that results in rebellion against God and issues in specific acts of immorality.

What are the consequences? Well, I say I suggest there're four. First of all, Adam's sin is imputed to the race. Every single individual who is born into this created world is born into this created world with Adam's sin imputed to him, reckoned to him. Later on we'll study why this is a gracious arrangement of God in spite of the fact that many people complain bitterly about why should I be subject to the penalty caused by Adam's sin. We'll explain that and I think try to show, and I believe successfully, that that was a gracious arrangement on the part of God. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:21 and 22, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." For as in Adam all die.

By the gracious plan of federal headship, God works. Without representation, Adam in the first case, Christ in the second, the human race might have perished forever. As James Henley Thornwell, in one of his works puts it, "If we cannot sin in another, we cannot be redeemed by another." But thank God, we are able to sin in Adam and have sinned in Adam, and therefore we can be redeemed in another, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I say, there are people who object to this. And they want to leave it on the theological level. And after all, we all have questions about it, but I assure you that if you

study the Scriptures, you will come to a sense of amazement at the wisdom of God at the plan he has devised.

But at any rate, assuming then that you don't understand this, I only ask you to consider it empirically. Everybody has died. From the day of Adam who died, and Eve who died, down to the present day, except for one or two rare exceptions in which God specifically worked, Elijah for example and so on. Men have died. And all of your ancestors who lived a century or two ago have died. Your immediate family is in process of dying. And you are in process of dying. Your name will appear on the obituary pages. And there will be something about you and about your family and about your funeral services. That is empirically true. Every one of us, if Christ does not return, shall die. God's covenant is being carried out according to his will. So, the sin of Adam is imputed to the race.

The second thing that has come as a consequence of the fall is the inheritance of original sin. Paul states in Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 3 that we are by nature the children of wrath. Now what does original sin involve? That actually is a term that links the corruption of our nature with the Garden of Eden. That's why it's called original sin, that is, it's a consequence of Adam's sin, of the original sin. We inherit not only condemnation immediately from the sin of Adam, but we also have a sinful nature which we derive from Adam. It involves guilt, liability to punishment. It involves pollution. It's the explanation of the statement the psalmist makes when he says "God is not in all their thoughts." Men are, as we say, totally depraved.

Now, when we say man is totally depraved, we are using a term that refers to the pervasiveness of sin. Men are totally depraved in that sense. Now let us not misunderstand. We do not mean that man is as bad as he can be necessarily. Some are approaching it, it seems from time to time. But nevertheless, we are not as bad as we can be. What total depravity means is that sin has touched all of the parts of our being, our mind, our emotions, our will.

To put it in another way, as John Gerster has often put it, "Total depravity refers to the corruption of the total human nature, not the total corruption of human nature." To the corruption of the total human nature, not the total corruption of human nature. That should be plain to us, but I repeat it in case some have never heard one discuss that point. It's not the most popular doctrine in the world.

One of the illustrations that Dr. Ironside used to use was a story about John Cook, the great Boston lecturer of the latter half of the nineteenth century. He illustrated total depravity, which he believed, in this way: He said he had at his home a very beautiful and valuable clock. It had an exceedingly handsome case, a very fine set of works. You would be astonished and surprised and pleased to open up the back of that clock and see the works of that clock. Furthermore, it had a nice appearing dial and elegantly finished hands. But it was, though an altogether good clock to look upon, it had one fault, it simply would not or could not keep time. It had been gone over by different clock makers. They had done the best that they could, but no one had been able to correct this fault. And Mr. Cook said, as a time piece it was totally depraved.

Now in that sense, we are totally depraved. Corruption has touched our total nature. Our minds are blinded. Our wills are rebellious. Our emotions are corrupt. Now of course, we may not manifest that in society, but nevertheless deep down within, everything is turned towards self. Self-regarding individuals we are. Just analyze yourself. I wish we had time to develop that further.

The third of the consequences is spiritual inability. In John chapter 6 and verse 44, the Lord Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Our wills are free, but we are not. And the result is that we have no free will. As a faculty, we have a will. We exercise our wills and we exercise our wills freely in the sense that we do what we want to do. But unfortunately, our nature is touched by sin. And so when we say we have no free will, we don't mean we don't have a will. We do have a will, and we exercise our will, and by itself it is free. But the will is a secondary

part of our being. We exercise our wills according to our nature, our disposition. And our disposition is touched by sin. And so our decisions are negative to the will of God.

Now this is such a common doctrine that a hundred years ago in evangelical churches, you could pass by at this point and say nothing more about it. But we are living in 1986, some of you are still in eighty-five, but some of us are in eighty-six, and we have to explain things like this because it's thought to be a new doctrine to say that we do not have a free will in the spiritual sense.

Listen to Luther, "If any man doth ascribe aught of salvation, even the very least, to the free will of man, he knoweth nothing of grace and he hath not learnt Jesus Christ aright." Listen to the thirty-nine articles of the Anglican Church. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God."

Listen to the *Book of Common Prayer*, "Oh almighty God who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful man." Listen to the Presbyterian Westminster Confession and the London Baptist Confessions, "Man by his fall into sin hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation. So as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereto." A Belgic Confession I pass by for the simple lack of time.

George Whitefield, the greatest evangelist that America has ever listened to said, "I hope we shall catch fire from each other and that there will be a holy emulation amongst us which shall most debase man and exalt the Lord Jesus."

Nothing but the doctrines of the Reformation can do this. All others leave free will in man and make him in part at least a savior unto himself. My soul come not thou near the secret of those who teach such things. I know Christ is all in all. Man is nothing. He hath the free will to go to hell, but none to go to heaven till God worketh in him to will and to do of his good pleasure.

I'm sorry, I have a lovely story and comment to say to you, but I cannot do it for lack of time. But listen to the New Testament, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

Listen to Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, they are spiritually discerned."

Listen to the apostle in Romans 8:7 and 8. I've cited this so many times. I hope someday when you're lying down on your bed taking a nap, Romans 8:7 and 8 comes floating across your mind as you drift off into dreamland. "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." All three of those texts use the verb to be able. "Neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." The texts are countless. I'm only astonished at how man restlessly seeks to avoid the plain teaching of holy Scripture.

The final of the consequences I'll state. You know it, there's no need to go into detail: The penalty of wrath and spiritual death forever. The apostle writing in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 and verse 9 states, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

A loving God does send men to hell. Let us never forget that. A loving God does send men to hell. Death. Death is a serious matter. Aristotle, who was no Christian, of course, said, "Death is a dreadful thing, for it's the end." Dr. Samuel Johnson, whose Christianity was suspect, said "No rational man can die without uneasy apprehension."

John Dunn, the Christian preacher and poet said, "Death is a bloody conflict and no victory at last, a tempestuous sea and no harbor at last, a slippery height and no footing, a desperate fall and no bottom." Mr. Mueller who wrote a large two-volume work on sin said, "No one is surer of applause than the man who discovers some new method of evading justice under the pretext of humanity." And thus the rise of universalism in our day and the rise of those who believe that there is no such thing as

eternal judgment. And thus flourish the sects who deny the doctrine of eternal punishment.

The Christian, the Christian says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." Or with Paul in the New Testament, "For I am sure that neither death nor life will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

If you're here this morning and you've never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we remind you of the saving work that he has accomplished as the last Adam, offering the blood by which men may be saved. If God in his marvelous grace has convinced you that you're a sinner, then let me assure you it doesn't, it shouldn't, take much convincing at all. Flee to the cross in order that you may be delivered from everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Come to Christ. Make that decision within your heart. Don't leave this auditorium without the sense of assurance that comes from the right relationship with Christ.

Not by good works, not by joining the church, not by being baptized, not by sitting at the Lord's table, not by education or culture, but through faith in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, a man or a woman is saved. Come to Christ. Believe in him. May God in his grace enlighten you to that end. It's my prayer and I believe the prayer of all the true believers in this audience.

May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for the word of God, for these plain facts about human nature. We confess that we are sinners far deeper than we ever understood, no doubt. Oh God, in Thy marvelous grace, save souls who are here today in this auditorium. May they at this very moment come to Thee and say "Lord, I'm a sinner. Christ died for sinners. I plead his saving grace for my soul now and forever." Lord, go with us. Make us faithful witnesses of the truth. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

“The Fall of Man and Human Inability” by S. Lewis Johnson
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