



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Timothy 2:1-7

"A Ransom for All, or John Calvin and a Work of Evangelism" TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Again Father, we come to Thee in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, thanking Thee for all of the ministry which he has undertaken in our behalf, and which he has accomplished through the work that was accomplished when he died upon the cross at Calvary. And we thank Thee that these great events that form the basis of our salvation were not merely happenings that took place at the contingency of human disobedience, but rather were planned events wrought in the counsels of the ages past. We thank Thee for all of the work of the Trinity of accomplishing our so great salvation. As we look again to a particular section of the word of God we pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit. We pray Lord, that our lives may be characterized by submission to his teaching. For we know he is the only infallible teacher, and may the teaching that he gives us result in lives that are characterized by godliness. We recognize that in holy Scripture we are exhorted to study the Scriptures. And we are also exhorted to study them with a view to holy living. We pray that Thou will create within each one of us present here tonight a desire to know Thee in this deeper way that the Lord Jesus Christ may be honored and glorified and the doctrine to which we hold may be adorned.

Now, we commit each one present to Thee. We pray that the particular needs that we have may be met through the power of the Holy Spirit. For Jesus' Sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight in our study we are turning to the 2 chapter of 2 Timothy, and our subject is, "A Ransom for All, or John Calvin and a Work of Evangelism." You will recognize, of course, that my title is not intended to indicate that we are going to study John Calvin and his work of evangelism, but rather we want to relate the system of doctrine that we have called Calvinism, particularly in its Soteriological aspects, to the phrase found in 1 Timothy chapter 2, a ransom for all. Now, we are studying in a consistent fashion in the sense that we are beginning at the 1st chapter and the 1st verse and going through this epistle, 1 Timothy. So will you now turn to 1 Timothy chapter 2, and I want tonight to cover the first seven verses of the second chapter. Let's listen now as we read verses 1 through 7.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (Incidentally, this word honesty is a word that really means "gravity." So the idea is of a person who has a calm serious attitude toward life. Honesty, of course, today has an entirely different connotation. Paul continues,) For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."

A number of important biblical doctrines come before us in this section. I think it would be possible for us to use this section as a basis for a series of messages that touch a wide variety of subjects. For example, we have here the doctrine of the Christian and

the state, in the 1st two verses. We have in the 5th verse a reference to monotheism, and so that brings up the subject of the theological doctrine of theism. We have reference to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and men, in the 5th verse. We have a rather definite statement with reference to the voluntary, substitutionary, and penal character of the atonement in the 6th verse. We have a clear bringing up of the question of the design of the atonement in the 4th verse and the 6th verse. In the 4th verse he says, "Who will have all men to be saved." And in the 6th verse, "Who gave himself a ransom for all." That raises the question, did Jesus Christ die for the purpose of saving each and every person. Did he die with the intention of saving the anti-Christ just as much as the Apostle Peter? Did he come with the intention of saving Judas, just as much as he came with the intention of saving the Apostle Paul? That question is raised by these statements.

We have also the relationship of preaching to the doctrine of the atonement raised in verses 6 and 7 where he speaks about this message being testified in due time. And then adds that he is ordained a preacher and an apostle, a preacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. And I think it's probably also accurate to say that we have the relation of salvation to sanctification raised here in the 4th verse, when he speaks about having all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. In fact, it might even be said that we have here a text that bears on the relationship of faith to reason. So you can see this passage is a passage that is full of theological or doctrinal content. And it could be used as a basis for a series of messages on all of these topics that I have just mentioned.

The second chapter of 1 Timothy also introduces us to a section which has to do with the importance of public worship and the conduct appropriate to it in the local church. And with the third chapter, which really is a continuation of the second; that sounds like that's not a very deep remark [Laughter] that happens to be true of every book of the Bible, that the third chapter follows the second, [Laughter], at least with most of us.

But these two chapters do form one section in the epistle, and when we put the third chapter and the second chapter together, we have what someone has called the earliest manual of church order that we possess. So chapters 2 and 3 are going to be very important for the doctrine of the local church, how we should meet, what we should do when we meet, who are the types of men who should have oversight over us, what is a deacon, are there such offices as deaconesses and some other questions raised here in these two chapters, which if our friend is correct are the earliest manual of church order that we possess. The principle that you will see emerging from Paul's references to the local church is the principle that he expresses in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, and verse 40. And that is that things should be done decently and in order in the local church.

Now, the apostle was a great believer in this, and I think we're going to see when we read through this, when he gives instructions concerning prayer, concerning women, concerning the elders, concerning deacons, that this principle of doing things decently and in order is important for him. Now, you know that when you study the Bible you must always notice connective particles. And we have a connecting particle in verse 1 of chapter 2. It's the word "therefore." I'm sure that you've heard many Bible teachers repeat this cliché of Bible teaching that whenever you see a therefore, you should be sure and find out what it is there for. And in this case the reason that this therefore is here, is to be located in the immediately preceding verses, in which, specifically in verse 18 of the preceding chapter Paul had said, "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare." For he had given Timothy a charge to war a good warfare.

Now what are the details of this good warfare? Well now, here are the details of the good warfare. Here are the details of the general charge referred to in the 18th verse. And in the second chapter two subjects are going to come before us, they are the subject of prayer and then subject of women. We'll look tonight at the subject of prayer, and the things that rise out of it. The first thing that Paul speaks about in the 1st verse and the

first part of the 2nd verse is the requirement of public prayer. Now, we're introduced to the relationship of the Christian to the state here. In general, of course, Christianity has inculcated a respect for the civil power. If we read passages like Romans chapter 13, verse 1 through verse 7 you may wonder how it is possible for a Christian to ever disagree with the state. And so far as I can tell from the study of the word of God, the only time in which a Christian is justified in fighting the state is when the state is clearly contrary to the word of God in its activities. And the principle of the word of God is, as expressed by the Apostle Peter when he had some difficulties with the state in his day, we must obey God rather than men. But as long as there is no conflict, we are duty bound to obey the state.

That is important, of course, for the Christian church. And it by virtue of the fact that, generally speaking, Christians have followed this principle, that Christianity has had the opportunity to spread and to be continually preached in the western world. And when Christians violate the teaching of the word of God, and bring upon themselves the wrath unnecessarily of the state, they suffer in their testimony and in the opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. But Paul now is going to speak about public prayer, and he begins by saying, "I exhort." "I beseech you in the light of the charge, Timothy, that I have just spoken about, that first of all," and he means by this the first subject I'm bringing up is prayer, "that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made for all men."

Now, we could spend too long a time discussing these Greek words that are given for prayer in the 1st verse. I don't think that's really necessary. Let me just briefly define them and speak of their leading characteristics. The first word which is translated in my Authorized Version that I am reading, "supplications" is a word that lays stress upon the needs that we have when we come to God in prayer. You know, there are times when we pray out of thanksgiving, as Paul will mention in just a moment. Then there are times in which we pray out of a desire simply to have communion with God. And there are

many, many times, and I guess most of us pray most frequently for this reason, when we have definite need. And that's the meaning of the first word translated "supplications." We could translate it "needs," but it means prayers in the sense of prayer directed toward some specific need that we have. So Paul asks that we offer prayers of need.

Then secondly he has a word that is translated in my version, "prayer." It's the general word for prayer in the New Testament, and most of the time, if there is no specific word used with some special emphasis; it is this word *rasuk* in the Greek text, which means simply prayer. The striking thing about it is it is always directed toward God. Now, it is possible for me to have a need, and express it by the use of the first word to you, because you might be able to supply my need. But this word is a word that has to do with prayer, and it is never used of anyone but God in the New Testament, that is a petition directed toward God. So prayer, that's the general word.

Then third, the word "intercession;" that word in the original, in its background, when I used to read classical Greek before I ever knew anything at all about New Testament Greek, before I was a Christian, I would meet this root in classical Greek, and it generally meant "to meet." And the word translated intercessions is a noun built on that root, that "to meet." But in the course of time came to refer to petitions in which a person often entered the presence of some high authority and submitted a petition to him. It came to be used of entering the presence of a king, and submitting a petition to him. It would be the word, I presume, if we were to be ushered into the presence of President Nixon with some particular need which we wish to address to him, some intercession. Well this word then, of course, looks at prayer as a means by which we enter into the presence of God, who is a king, and we present a petition to him.

And the final word "giving of thanks" means simply what it means in English. It means the prayers of thanksgiving. Many of our prayers are prayers which we introduce by thanksgiving. We usually begin by saying that we "Thank Thee, O Lord, for certain blessings." Well, these are the types of prayers that the apostle urges Timothy and the

members of the local church to offer. He is speaking about public prayer, prayer in the meetings of the church.

Now, in all the meetings of the church, most all of them, we have prayer made. Even tonight in the Bible Study hour, we begin with a word of prayer and generally conclude with a word of prayer. And I hope that as the truth impresses itself upon you, as you listen to the exposition of it, that some things that will come to you that are particularly thrilling to you or that you're responsive to and that you offer up a petition, either of thanksgiving or a petition by which you ask God to make some of these truths real in your own life. Now, Paul says that these petitions should be made for all men. Does that mean every member of the human race? In other words, is the apostle asking us to pray for every single individual? Does all men always mean that? That raises that question.

If you turn over to Titus chapter 2, in verse 11, we'll read a statement in which the apostle writes, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Now there are different ways in which we may render this verse, but the essential truth that I want to bring out is not affected by any of these different renderings. Notice the statement, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Now, has the grace of God that bringeth salvation appeared to all men? No it has not appeared to all men. Not all men have had the opportunity to come face to face with the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ and the ministry that has come to us through him. So the idea that the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men is just not true, if we take the term "all men" to mean every single individual. There are some individuals who, the moment they are born, die in infancy. So we'll see here from this one text, I'm going to refer to some others, that the expression "all men" does not always refer to every single individual without exception.

There are different senses that the expression "all men" may have. Let's turn over to Romans chapter 5, and verse 18. In Romans chapter 5 and verse 18 we read,

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Now, I ask you a question, is it true that all men have been the recipients of justification? No, of course not, let me just give you one illustration to prove the point. Judas, Judas was not justified, yet our text says, "Upon all men to justification of life." You see, there are some expressions which are universal on the surface, that must be defined in the light of context and in the light of other matters. Let's turn over to the Gospel of Mark, and let me look at a few passages there. In Mark chapter 1 and verse 37 we read, "And when they had found him, they said unto him, all men seek for thee." Now, was it true that every single individual was seeking after the Lord Jesus? No, all men were not seeking after him. Many men were very much opposed to him, and many men were totally oblivious to his existence. These are expressions that must be defined by the context.

I might even say to you, did everyone get wet tonight? Every one of you might have gotten a little wet, but that "everyone" must be defined by the particular context in which it's used. Let's look on to Mark chapter 5, and verse 20. Mark chapter 5, and verse 20 we read, "And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel." Now, did every single individual marvel at the works of Jesus Christ? No, this is to be interpreted by the context. Not every single individual marveled. All men, as an expression is to be interpreted by the context. Take a look at chapter 11, and verse 32 of this same book, "But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed." Now, not everybody counted John a prophet. As a matter of fact, John lost his head finally by a person who evidently didn't think he was, at least, a very good prophet, in his own specific case anyway. And we know, of course, from the facts that John was not regarded from every single individual as a prophet. In other words, the term "all men" must be interpreted by the contexts in which it is found. There are other passages to which we could turn, but there is no reason to labor the point.

Coming back to 1 Timothy chapter 2, what is the context? Well now, this context has to do with the group or classes of men. Notice what he says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority." So he names there a specific class of men. In a moment in verse 7 he will say that he is a "teacher of the Gentiles." So you see, what the term all men must mean is determined by the context, and in the context here the apostle is talking about classes or groups of men. In other words, he's talking about all men without distinction, but not all men without exception. So prayers are to be made for all classes of men, whether rich or poor, whether bond or free, whether Jew or Gentile, whether kings or peasants, all classes of men are to be included within the purview of prayer.

Now, that is an important principle and in a moment when we come to a ransom for all, we will then be able to understand what the apostle means when he speaks about a ransom for all. Now then, he says, "For kings," this of course, is one of the special things he wants prayer to be made about, so he itemizes one of the groups of the "all men." "For kings and all that are in authority." And incidentally, the apostle asked that Timothy might pray for all men, and kings, even though the apostle spent a great deal of his praying time in prison because the emissaries of kings had put him there. So you can see that this is a doctrinal matter with him and not based on any particular situation in which he found himself. He was following what he thought was the teaching of the Spirit of God. And so even in spite of the fact that he has suffered much from kings, he calls upon the saints to remember the kings and all who are in authority in their prayers. And that's why on Sunday morning, for example, from this pulpit you'll probably hear a lot of people praying for Washington, and in various other parts of the lands you will hear Christians offer prayers for those who are in authority over them. So that means in spite of the fact that we want to vote for Reagan or Carter, I resist the impulse to say anything [Laughter] but it's difficult fighting it, or Church or Udall or any of the others. In spite of

the fact that you intend to vote for someone else, you should remember President Ford, and you should remember him in your prayers, and you should remember his cabinet and other men who are with him in his government. And you should remember our state government and our local government. These are proper petitions for Christians to make, and especially in their public meetings, because the apostle is speaking about the church and in its meetings.

But why should we pray for men who are in authority? Well Paul gives us two reasons essentially. One of them is very brief. And the other one, in characteristic apostolic fashion is strung out over several verses, because once he says one thing it reminds him of something else, and that reminds him still of something else, and so the second reason becomes a very lengthy one. But the first of the reasons for the prayers, which he has exhorted Timothy and others to make, is that we might live a quiet and peaceable life in all Godliness and gravity. So the reason we should pray for kings and men in authority is that by this means we are often allowed to practice the truth to which we hold. And we are able to practice it without fear, and we are able to practice it in Godliness and true biblical solemnity by virtue of the answer of the prayers of the saints.

Now, I commented upon the fact that honesty is really the word gravity. This word, the adjective is the adjective semnotes. A semnotes kind of man was a man whose life was one long act of worship. Someone has said "A semnotes man was a man who lived as if the whole of the world was a temple, and a temple dedicated to God." So a man who lived a life of godliness and gravity is a man who is so dedicated to the fulfillment of the will of God in his life, that he considers all of his relationships to be relationships within the temple of God, and his life is characterized constantly by worship." Now, that is a high standard. Many of us rarely ever attain to this as a study thing, but it is held before us as the goal of Christian living. So the prayers that we offer to President Ford and the men in authority are with the intention that through the answers to the prayer we might live a quiet and peaceable life in all Godliness and gravity.

And that, of course, is a worthy reason for prayer, because it means that by this the program of God is furthered. I know that a lot of people say, "Well, my goodness isn't the program of God going to be accomplished whether we ourselves pray in this way?" Well, yes God is going to accomplish his purposes. But you see, he has determined that his purposes be accomplished through means, through the means of witnessing, through the means of prayer, and therefore we ought, as his children, to respond to these exhortations realizing that it is through these things that we have a part, a personal part, in what God is going to do. Now, if you lay down on the job and do not do what you are supposed to do, that will not keep him from accomplishing his purposes. He'll just accomplish them through someone else, and you'll learn, ultimately, that it was his decreative will that he should do that. But you lose the Christian rewards that are referred to in Scripture by virtue of your resistance to these evidences of his perceptive will that are found in the word. Now, that is the first reason, that we might live a quiet and peaceable life in all Godliness and gravity.

Now, the fact that he says gravity seems to me applies to some of our meetings. It's all right to have a meeting in which we have a lot of fun, but when we are talking about the things that pertain to the local church and the meetings of the local church, we ought to have kinds of meetings that are characterized by Godliness and gravity. Now, that I am sure we each may respond to in our own way, but sometimes I do think that our meetings generate a flippancy and superficiality which is not honoring to God. Now, I hope I am not saying that because I grew up as a Presbyterian. And I grew up in a church in which if somebody had shouted out Hallelujah, three or four people would have died of heart attack. [Laughter] Perhaps some of that has rubbed off on me, but I still think it is a good idea when the saints come together, to come together with some sense of the fact that we are, by virtue of our meeting of the name of the Lord Jesus, we are the house of God, and he is present. And we should avoid flippancy and the things that bring discredit upon the truth of Jesus Christ. And if you will pardon me for saying

this, I know some of you are going to get mad at me for saying this, I think that this pertains even to our dress. One person was smiling until I said that, and then they stopped smiling. [Laughter] It pertains even to our dress, and I think that whatever we do in the meetings of the local church, it should be remembered that we are in the presence of God if we are meeting in his name.

I feel, I believe, I hope you will not be mad at me, I believe that this has very definite applications to Believers Chapel. If you are not from Believers Chapel, then of course I am not speaking to you. You can sit back and relax and say, "I'm glad someone's finally telling them off." [Laughter] That's not my intention at all, of course, but I do feel this, and at least listen to what an old man has to say.

Now, the second thing is more important, I guess, and so we want to talk about the second reason for prayer, and it is, it's acceptable in the sight of God. Notice what he says in the 3rd verse, and this reasons, I say, continues through the 6th verse. He says, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior." Prayer for kings is admirable. And it's admirable in the presence of God. He likes it. It is acceptable to God our Savior. Tranquility promotes the gospel. And that is why it is pleasing to God that we pray for those who are in authority. And furthermore, Paul says, it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." He desires the salvation of all men.

Now, what do we mean by all men? We mean the same thing we meant in the first verse, all kinds of men. He's not talking about everybody without exception, but everyone without distinction. He desires the salvation of all kinds of men. So pray for kings. The tendency might be for a Christian who has suffered under kings to not pray for kings. I find that's often the case among Christians. They wonder, back during World War II they prayed for Churchill, some of them prayed for De Gaul, they prayed for Roosevelt, but pray for Stalin, I'm not so sure I ought to pray for Stalin, but all kinds of men are to be prayed for. I confess, I didn't always pray the same thing for Stalin that I

prayed for Roosevelt, but nevertheless if I had been a Russian Christian, I should have prayed for that monster. [Laughter] And perhaps he would have been a better monster [Laughter] had those Christians over there prayed more faithfully for him.

Now, let's come to the text here, and to understand exactly what he means then by these expressions, "Who will have all men to be saved." Now, some have taken this as God's desire, simply, that all men will be saved. And they have pointed to the fact that in this 4th verse the word for willing is a word that frequently means simply "to wish." And so they have translated it "who wishes all men to be saved." But he does not will them to be saved. And so they have said this is his will of benevolent desire. It's what he desires, but it's not what he intends. I don't think that that is the meaning of Paul. I find it a little difficult to think of God wishing something to take place, which he has not willed to take place. That seems to me to be contradictory, and so I do not take that interpretation. As a matter of fact this word "to will" here is ordinarily the weaker word for willing. Now, we have the stronger word in 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 9, in which we have the text "God is longsuffering to upward to you who believe, not willing that any who believe," that is, of you, "should perish, but that all," that is, of you "should come to repentance. Now willing, that word is the strong word, but this word is a weaker word. But still, since it is God who is willing and since Fellow does frequently have the sense of the will of God, I'm inclined to think that what this means is exactly what it means in the other text. It means that God will have all men to be saved, but all men is to be interpreted as the all men of verse 1, all classes of men. He's speaking about groups. He is saying he wants Gentiles to be saved as well as Jews to be saved. And in a moment, Paul will speak of himself as a teacher the Gentiles in faith and verity, because he does not want them to think that God is a God who only ministers to the chosen people through the gospel.

Now he says, "Who will have all men to be saved." And then what this means is men of all classes, and if it is his intention that men of all classes be saved, that is the expression of his will. Now, if it is his will that all classes of men be saved, all men

without distinction, not all without exception, then ultimately this text has to do with the elect, and later on we read in the Bible, remember, in the Book of Revelation, that finally some of out of every kindred, tribe, and tongue, and nation shall come to faith in Jesus Christ. And so this intention of God is going to be fulfilled. There are nobles who are saved. There are peasants who are saved. There are rich who are saved. There are poor who are saved. There are men who are saved. There are women who are saved. There are free men who are saved. There are slaves who are saved. And there are Jews who are saved and there are Gentiles who are saved. There are some from every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation, and from every station in life. That's, it seems to me, the intention of this, and then we have perfect harmony in Scripture, and we don't have men frustrating the purpose of God and then having a God who is not really sovereign at all. That would be very difficult for me to take, because I would not have the confidence in a God who could not overcome man's rebellion that I have now in the confidence that I have in a great sovereign God.

Now then, he also adds, "and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." You see, the result of being saved is that men come to know the truth. Incidentally, will you notice that salvation precedes the coming to the knowledge of the truth? We, of course, must receive the gospel in order to be saved. We must know the facts of the gospel, but when we believe the facts of the gospel, then there is opened up to us a knowledge of the truth of God. And it is the purpose of God through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit to use all of the faculties that he has given us in our study of the word of God in order to bring us to maturity. After all, that's what God is doing with us. He's not trying to save as many people as possible. He's trying to save a certain class or certain group of people and bring them to maturity. That's the way the apostle expresses his mission as to present every man perfect in Christ. It means all the saved. So God is interested in an evangelism that includes a sanctification, a maturity. Paul says here it's first salvation then the knowledge of the truth or it's faith first. And faith is always supreme. Reason is always

subordinate. It is only after we have come to truth that under the Spirit our reason becomes helpful to us in understanding the revelation that God has given us. Faith is always preeminent.

Now then, Paul doesn't stop there. He says in the 5th verse, "For," "For." He desires all men, men from every rank and station, tribe and nation, for there's only one God. Notice that one little word "For." That's why he's interested in all classes of men, not one God for this nation and another God for another nation. That's the way the heathen think. You go to some places right now where they are really rank even. They each have their own little gods. They have the god of the tree and the god of the stump over there, and the god of this, and the god of the wind, and the god of just all kinds of gods and each has his own little god. Those people to whom Paul ministered were sick and burdened down with the gods. And even the enlightened Greeks had their gods, their ranks and hierarchies of gods. The apostle says God is interested in the salvation of all classes of men, "For there is just one God." This is the reason for what he has been saying.

Now he goes on to say, "There is one God." Now, of course, we don't have to talk about that, because I've already spoken about that. A Christian cannot under any circumstances acknowledge anything more than the triune God, the God who is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit' the one God who subsists in three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. Every other God is a false God. But when the heathen use the term god and think of their own god when they use the term, we are not to say, "Yes, you're a believer in god, and I'm a believer in God." We are to say, "You don't really believe in God." You're using the term, but your concept does not match the true concept. You are not really a believer. You are using my term, which refers to the true God. Paul says there is one God. Christianity is very exclusive, very exclusive. It speaks right to every man, no matter from what place he may come, and says, "Your gods are false gods. There is only

one God. He's the Father of Jesus Christ." We don't have to labor that point. The apostle makes the point not only here but in other passages.

In Romans chapter 3, in verse 29 he says there, "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through faith." So you see there is just one God, no dualism with the Gnostics. He wrote to people who were influenced by Gnosticism. They thought the God of the Old Testament was different from the God of the New Testament. They thought that the holy God could not possibly be the creator of this universe, and so they thought of a whole string of deons that preceded out of the God in heaven, until finally one of these little deons was wicked enough to create this creation. And many of them, I say, thought of the God of the Old Testament as being an entirely different God from the New Testament God. So Paul says there's just one God. That's why he's interested in the salvation of Jew and Gentile.

So the heathen, what kind of gods did they have? Well, they had gods who lusted, who played, who ran after women, who murdered, who stole. All you have to do is to read in Greek mythology to see the kinds of gods that the Greeks thought about, and many less enlightened people worshipped whole panoplies of God, which all of these things were true of them. You know that out in many of the mission fields in South America, and still some places in Africa, people are deeply afraid of their gods. These are great messages that came to people like that. There is one God, and he's a holy God. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men." This is something the Indians have a very difficult time understanding. This is one thing in Christianity that they find very difficult. Because, for example, the Hindus, they find it very difficult to believe that there is one way to God through Christianity. They tend to think we have our way, and you in the western world have your way. Though the apostle says there is one God, there is one mediator between God and men. There is no way to God except by Jesus Christ. That means if you are an Episcopalian, you cannot get to God through the

Episcopalian church. If you are Roman Catholic, you cannot get to God through the Roman Catholic church. If you're a Presbyterian you cannot get to God through your Pastor. You can only come to God through Jesus Christ. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Peter said.

Now when he says there is only one mediator, he's also attacking the Jews who thought Moses was also a mediator. And who also included among the mediators, the angels. For he's eliminating Moses, he's eliminating the angels; he's making the Lord Jesus the only mediator. So there is one God. There is one mediator between God and men, and surprisingly he says, "The man Christ Jesus." Isn't that interesting? We are inclined to think, before we read a text like this, that the Lord Jesus became a man, but he was a man for only a time. Now he's not a man. Scriptures, of course, affirm that when he took to himself human nature he became the God-man, and he is still the God-man. He has wedded himself to our humanity, and it's like a wedding down here on earth. It should last throughout one's life. And so in his case, it lasts throughout all his life. As the second person of the trinity, he condescended; it seems to me, to take to himself human nature, and betrothed human nature to himself forever. Isn't it amazing that he should become a man forever? Paul says, "The man Christ Jesus, who is the mediator," stressing the fact he had to be a man in order to be our substitute. We'll drop that.

He says, "Who gave himself a ransom for all." Now, this statement is very great. We've talked about this from time to time. I'm just going to center attention on one or two points. Of course, this expresses the fact that this ransom is voluntary, "he gave himself." It is penal, for it's a ransom, and a ransom is a payment of a penalty in order to secure the release of some. This is a reflection of his own statement, which in turn is a reflection of the Old Testament. But remember, he said, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," Mark chapter 10, verse 45; Matthew chapter 20, verse 28. That it is a reflection of Isaiah chapter 53 where it speaks about the fact that he poured out his life for many.

Now then, what about this? "He gave himself a ransom for all." Let me ask you a question. Since he says this is for all, and the term for ransom here is a term that implies substitution, and "for all" implies that, then we can add, of course, this is a substitutionary sacrifice. The Lord Jesus took the place of all men. Now, if he took the place of all men, how are we to understand the "all men?" Every single individual? Well, let me ask you a question, if the Lord Jesus took the place of every single individual and bore the punishment of every single individual, then who does not every single individual go free? We would have to have a doctrine of universalism. Now, if you should say, "Well we have to believe." Let me ask you a question. Is unbelief a sin? Yes. Did not Jesus die for all sins? Yes. He died for that unbelief. Oh but you still insist it's ours only on the basis of faith? I grant that it become ours only by faith, but that faith is procured by the cross and the work that was done there. But we must believe to make it valid. Well, if that's so then our salvation ultimately rests upon us. And if it rests upon as something that we've done, then it's not a great salvation. Now, if the Lord Jesus is a true substitute, if there is a true ransom accomplished, then those for whom it is accomplished must go free.

Well now, everybody doesn't go free, we know that. The anti-Christ did not. Judas is not. There are many, many thousands of people who are already being held, Peter tells us, for judgment. And if that's the case, then the all must not mean every single individual, but again, as it means in the context, all classes of men, all men without distinction, but not all without exception. Some of you are looking very puzzled. You've never heard anybody talk to you like that, I know. Well you need somebody to talk to you like that. [Laughter] It's not very popular to do that, but you need someone to talk to you like that.

Jim Packer is one of the outstanding theologians of the present day. One day I would love to have him come to Believers Chapel and give us a series of messages. I think it would be great. I would love to have a theological conference here. One elder

in the audience, I hope he's listening; I would love to have a theological conference in which we have some good men who are able to communicate, as well as give us some good theology if we could have a conference. And Packer would be one of the men that I would like to see come. He has some words on this subject. He says, "And if Christ by his death on my behalf secured reconciliation and righteousness as gifts for me to receive, did not this make it certain that the faith which receives these gifts would also be given me as a direct consequence of Christ dying for me. Once this is granted, however, we are shut up to a choice between universalism and some form of the view that Christ died to save only a part of the human race.

But if we reject these options what have we left? The only coherent alternative is to suppose that though God purposed to save every man through the cross, some thwart his purpose by persistent unbelief, which can only be said if one is ready to maintain that God, after all, does no more than make faith possible. And then in some sense, that it's decisive for him as well as for us, leaves it to us to make faith actual. Moreover, any who take this position must redefine substitution in imprecise terms if indeed they do drop the term altogether. For they are committing themselves to deny that Christ's vicarious sacrifice ensures anyone's salvation, also, they have to give up Toplady's position, 'Payment God cannot twice demand, first from my bleeding surety's hand, and then again from mine.' For it is of the essence of their view that some who sends Christ's bore with saving intent will ultimately pay the penalty for those same sins in their person, for how can we explain that Lord Jesus dies twice for the sins of men?"

He goes on to say, "So it seems that if we are going to affirm penal substitution for all without exception, we must either infer a universal salvation or else to evade this inference, deny the saving efficacy for the substitution for anyone. And if we're going to affirm penal substitution as an effective saving act of God, we must either infer universal salvation, or else to evade this inference restrict the scope of the substitution, making a substitution for some, not all." That's what Paul does. That's what the New Testament

does. That's what we learn from history, because God's purposes cannot fail, and all men are not saved. It's best in the final analysis to determine what God intended to do, by what is done. And since the elect are saved and the non-elect are lost, we can only infer from what God does that his purpose therefore was not to save the non-elect but to save the elect.

Now then, what does that do to preaching of the gospel? Nothing, nothing so far as the universal preaching of the gospel is concerned. Did you notice what Paul says here, "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." The New International Version says, "The testimony given at its proper time." When is the time for the testimony of Christ's ransoming work to be given? Throughout this present age; therefore, in the light of what Christ has done, we preach the gospel to all men. We do not know who the elect are. I do not know who the elect are. There's only one person that I know is elect, and that's I. The only person that you know is yourself. You may have some impressions that others are elect by virtue of what you may see in their lives, but we do not know who the elect are. There is no possible way for us to know. We preach the gospel to all. We preach it to all, because, of course, God has commanded us to do it. And we do it, because we don't know the elect, and we trust the Holy Spirit to bring the truth to those to whom he desires to do it.

People often say, "Well, this kind of preaching stops evangelistic preaching." Have you studied history? Have you studied history? Why, a good Arminian friend of mine at the seminary on the seminary faculty, our Professor of, I shouldn't say an Arminian friend. He's not a total Arminian, but he has leanings that way. [Laughter] He has affirmed to me that in the last two hundred years almost all of the outstanding mission work has been done by men of Calvinistic persuasion. Isn't that striking? Today, what particular plan of evangelism in the local churches is best known among evangelicals? Why, it's the plan of James Kennedy of Florida. That plan is studied in Dallas Theological Seminary, for example. It is widely diffused, D. James Kennedy's evangelistic program in his

Presbyterian church. He's a Calvinist. Evidently it has not hurt the preaching of the word of God. As a matter of fact, it is by virtue of the fact that we have a sovereign God, in whom we can trust, and who accomplishes his will, it is by this that we are given incentive and motivation, and encouragement to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, knowing that God will accomplish his purposes. That is tremendous incentive for preachers. So John Calvin, on the work of evangelism, why, it's the same as Paul's. God has some people out there who are his, evidently, for Christ has not come. And we are called upon to preach this word and trust the Holy Spirit to bring fruit, as that word is proclaimed.

The apostle concludes with a little which he stresses, he is a teacher of the Gentiles, again stressing the groups of people that are objects of the saving work of Jesus Christ. Time's up, we'll have to stop. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the expression of the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. And we praise Thee for all that we have through him. We pray that as we read and study the Scriptures Thou will continue to give us understanding and enable us to grow in grace and...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]