



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 16:16-24

"The Outcome of the Resurrection"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading is John chapter 16 verse 16 through verse 24. And following that we will sing a cappella. It's very interesting to me that we don't have a pianist this morning. Mr. Prier doesn't know why and I don't know why, but in our evening meetings we sing in this way. And so how would I guess that that's one of the values of not using the piano at night, in case we don't have one in the morning we don't feel so inconvenienced by it.

John chapter 16 through verse 24 is the section we want to look at in the exposition of the word this morning. The Lord Jesus, remember, is speaking concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And is often the case, when he finishes his discussion of one topic he introduces a statement that the apostles might puzzle a bit over as basis for further discussion. And so we read in verse 16,

"A little while and you shall not see me. And again, a little while and ye shall see me because I go to the Father.' Then said some of his disciples among themselves, 'What is this that he saith unto us? 'A little while and ye shall not seem, and again a little while and ye shall see me, and because I go to the Father.' They said therefore, 'What is this that he saith, 'a little while'? We cannot tell what he saith.' Now Jesus knew that there were desires to ask him and said unto them, 'Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, 'a little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see

me?' Verily, verily I say unto you that you shall weep and lament but the world shall rejoice. And ye shall be sorrowful but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour is come. But as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing."

Now, this word "ask" is a word which in the original text often has the sense of "ask a question". And then the second "ask" is a word that is commonly used in the asking of prayer. And then again in the next verse the word used commonly for asking in prayer is used again. So verse 23 might be rendered,

"And in that day ye shall ask me no further questions. Verily, verily I say unto you whatsoever you shall ask (that is in prayer) the Father in many he will give you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father we are indeed grateful to Thee for the blessings that are ours through the Lord Jesus Christ. And we thank Thee for this beautiful day, for the privilege of life and health. And we give Thee thanks for all of the hand of Thy blessing upon us which Thou hath so marvelously supplied us with through the years. And we give Thee thanks Lord for all that our great God in heaven is; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And we worship Thee Lord for all of the blessings of life that are ours through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank Thee for this particular opportunity that is ours to open the Scriptures and to listen to Thy voice through the word and we pray Thy blessing upon us as we meet. We pray for our

country, for its leadership. We pray for the Church of Jesus Christ. We especially remember those of our congregation who are ill and sick, and who have other discouraging and difficult experiences. We commit them to Thee. And we pray that Thou wilt give healing, and give guidance and direction, and give sustaining. Give comfort were needed.

May, Lord, through the Holy Spirit the ministry of the triune God be rich toward us. And Lord speak to us. In the ways in which we have displeased Thee give us the grace to make confession and give us restoration into a deeper communion with Thee. Enable us Lord to realize that there is still much land to be possessed while we are living. Deliver us from self-satisfaction. Deliver us from indifference and lethargy in spiritual things. Enable us to make the most of the opportunity of life that we have.

And we pray, Lord, that Thou wilt enable us to be a good and profitable representative of the Lord Jesus Christ in our family, among our friends, in our business relationships, in our relationships with our individuals. And Lord we would pray especially for those who are mentioned in our calendar of concern. We bring them all before Thee. Thou knowest their names, and their problems, and their difficulties. Minister to them. We commit this meeting to Thee and the meeting of the evening to Thee. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for this morning and the exposition of the word is "The Outcome of the Resurrection". True spirituality most Christians realize and know is a personal thing. We can never really be satisfied with an intellectual knowledge of the Lord God that does not issue in a spiritual and personal response to him. The reason that this is so is bound up also in the way in which God has spoken to us. In fact, this very need that there should be a personal relationship with the Lord God necessitated the incarnation. Remember in this very Gospel that the Apostle John has written, he has said in the first chapter and the 18th verse, "No man has seen God at anytime. The only begotten son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." And then later in chapter 14 and verse 9 speaking with Philip the Lord Jesus had said to him in answer to Philip's

desire to see the father, "Philip, have I been so long time with you and yet has thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the father. And how sayest thou then, 'Show us the Father.'"

Later in the first epistle John writes about how in the ministry of the Lord Christ the apostles came to a personal relationship to him. The way he begins his epistle lays that out for he says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled concerning the word of life." There is a story that Rufus Jones the Quaker philosopher used to tell. When a mother was seeking to assure her little daughter that she need not be afraid of the dark she added, "Because the Lord will be with you." And the little girl replied, "But I don't want God. I want someone with a face." And of course, we understand exactly how she felt. She was thinking of something personal; someone that she could touch. And in a sense she speaks for everyone because we do want a personal relationship with the Lord God. And in fact, Paul uses that very expression. He says that, "Our relationship with the Lord God is a relationship that is related to the face of Jesus Christ."

Christianity, as you know, is distinguished from other religions in at least two ways. First of all, and one that we commonly speak about is this: Christianity is a religion of something that has been done for us whereas all other systems of truth are systems by which we may come to merit God's favor by doing something ourselves. And Bible teachers and theologians have often pointed out that the distinction is the distinction of two words; done and doing. And in Christianity we have a religion of that which has been done for us by Christ, that which is given to us in free grace. But in every other system of truth it is something that we must do in order to merit the favor of God. It may be called Christianity and it may even involve a sacramental system, but in the sacramental system you must do something in order to merit the favor of God. So Christianity is the system of done, other religions the system of that which we must do.

One might ask the question, "Why is it that our works cannot save us?" Well, in the first place the Lord demands perfect obedience and we unfortunately cannot keep the law. Listen to the prophet, "But we are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." And the

Apostle Paul writing in the New Testament says, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse because it stands written, 'Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.'" And no one can keep the law perfectly, but if we're on a system of doing that's what must be done. And if works justify then Jesus Christ died in vain. If we could receive eternal life but what we did what is the point of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Paul puts it this way, "For I do not frustrate the grace of God. If righteousness comes by the law then Christ died in vain or if justification is by works then it is not by grace." But the Bible says it's by grace. Listen again to Paul, "And if by grace then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."

And further and finally, if works justified it would give us cause to boast. But the New Testament and the Old Testament too makes it very plain that we have no right to boast before God. Paul says, "Where is boasting then? It's excluded. By what law? By the law of works? No, but by the law of faith." So Christianity is a religion of done. Other religions, all of them had many brands of Christianity which falsely understand Christianity, are religions of doing.

Now, there is another difference between Christianity and other religions that is extremely important. And it's this: almost all other religions, so far as I know all of them, though they speak with a slightly different accent at times are systems of truth in which the relationship to God is impersonal. Now, if one is a perceptive Christian and a mature Christian he can almost always notice this even in the accents of the words of the individuals. They speak of their God in an impersonal way. And the distinguishing feature of Christianity is that the relationship that a Christian has to God through Jesus Christ is a personal relationship.

And again, a perceptive mature Christian can almost always tell the difference in the tone of voice. It's a striking thing, but one can do this. I know many of you have had the experience that I've had. You've been in many churches. You can go in the midst of the congregation and in the midst of the congregation you can almost always tell shortly whether the congregation as a whole is generally speaking a congregation of Christians who have a personal relationship with the Lord. And

then speaking to individuals you can notice the tone, the flavor, the disposition of the individual and understand whether they have a personal relationship or an impersonal relationship. Almost always other religions have the impersonal relationship. There is always something that comes between them and the Lord God. It may be a religious man; a priest or a preacher. It may be a sacramental system. It may be some form of clerical intermediary relationship. But nevertheless it's there. But in Christianity we have the personal relationship. That's preeminent.

There's an old story about a little town that grew up around a spring. The spring's water had medicinal qualities and people came and they generally began to build their homes nearby. And finally the little town grew into a quite large place. And finally someone came to the town and said, "Where is the spring around which the village and city has grown?" And an individual is reported to have replied, "Well, I'm sorry but somehow in the midst of all of our progress and improvement we lost the spring." That's often true in Christianity. You can go into Christian churches, as you well know, and congregations meet, they have the Bible, they have a sermon, they sing Christian hymns but they've lost the spring -- the spring of personal relationship. It's sad but it's true.

A few weeks ago I saw in one of the publications I receive a reference to a preacher friend of man. He's an old man now. He's eighty-four or five years of age. He's a minister. His son is a minister and his son is a former student of mine in seminary, and we've remained fairly close through the years and talk together over the telephone every now and then. And so I saw a reference to his father's illness and I wrote him just a little card and tried to encourage him a little bit. And he's been ministering the word of God probably for sixty-five years now. And wrote me back a little letter and he was out preaching. And he said, "That you kindly for the postcard with the words of hope and good cheer. I'm now on female hormones and the pain is not so great." He has cancer and he was confined to his bed for a little while. He says, "My back does trouble me. The red blood cells are weakened and destroyed by the cancer. And the doctors tell me if it grows worse I'll have to have a transfusion."

Then he adds this paragraph, "I have learned that all the whys, whens, wheres, and wherefores in life are in the strong hands of Jesus Christ. I bow to his will and sing, 'Our Jesus does all things well.'" Then he goes on to talk about how he's ministering in this particular town in Ohio. And speaks of another fellow that I used to have in class and said that he's doing a great job and glad that I'm keeping busy and still preaching the word. Now, to me that is beautiful illustration of the effects of a personal relationship with the Lord, a man eighty-five years of age -- cancer; terminal illness. He's still out preaching. And not only that, but he has what our Lord speaks about here -- this Christian joy.

Now, the Lord has been speaking to the apostles and preparing them for the future. He's been talking to them about the attitude of the world and he said, "The world's going to hate you." And then he has given them the promise of the coming ministry of the Holy Spirit who will convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. And he said further that his conviction that the spirit is going to bring is going to be a conviction that comes through you. And now at the conclusion of his words concerning the spirit he had uttered this little enigmatical statement designed no doubt to call forth some discussion.

"A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while and you shall see me because I go to the Father." That would suggest a kind of methodology like a TV quiz program, like that one they used to have a long time ago entitled, "What's my line", in which some particular comment is made and the audience is expected to try to identify the individual or whatever his particular occupation might be.

So our Lord has uttered then the word that's designed to bring forth some discussion. And the apostles are properly puzzled. And we read in the next two verses, "'Then,' said some of his disciples among themselves, 'what is this that he's saying to us, 'A little while and you shall not see, and a little while you shall see me and because I go to the Father.' We don't understand what he means by a little while.'" That is rather interesting because it illustrates for us the fact that the apostles who stood on the other side of the cross didn't always understand things that Jesus was

saying to them. In fact, they could have made a rather good theological case. They could say, "Why does he talk like this? If he wants to found a messianic kingdom, why does he go away? And furthermore, if he does not want to found a messianic kingdom then why does he want to return?"

So they could have made quite a good case. But of course, it's helpful for us to remember that the apostles were not theological and spiritual giants at this point. And so consequently, there were many things that the Lord Jesus said that they did not fully comprehend. It wasn't until later when the Holy Spirit came that they were introduced into the understanding of much of the ministry the Lord had given to them.

And then remember this: we stand on the other side of the cross and we're able to look back and see what happened when our Lord suffered, and died and then was raised from the dead. And these little things like, "A little while" become more meaningful to us. But they didn't have that advantage.

Well, the Lord answers that question, or gives them an explanation in verses 19 and 20. He says, "Are you inquiring among yourselves of what I have said, "A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while and you shall see me." And now in the 20th verse, in order to give an important statement, he introduces it with a "verily, verily". "Verily, verily I say unto you that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice. And you shall be sorrowful and your sorrow shall be turned into joy." One might with reason say, "Lord, you have really responded to our question. We ask about a little while." But Jesus does what he often does, he replies to their need rather than to the specific question that they've asked. And their need is their relationship to him.

And so he says, "There is a time coming when you're going to weep and lament. It's helpful for us to remember that it was customary in the Ancient East to weep and lament publicly over the loss of loved ones. In fact, it was not uncommon to hire professional weepers, and mourners, and wailers. So when someone lost their lives you would call up the equivalent of the funeral home and say, "I would like to hire some wailers." And the professional wailers would come and stand outside and wail audibly so that the whole community would know that which had happened."

Now, these are words that are often used with that and so the Lord Jesus is suggesting by his answer the explanation to the little while. He's going to die. So he says, "You shall weep and lament." Now notice he says, "The world's going to rejoice." That's fully in accord with everything that he said about the world hating the Christians. He said, "Remember, they will hate you because they hate me. And you may expect that but the Holy Spirit is going to work through you and he's going to use you in spite of the world's hatred." And here again that same theme comes. "You shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice." The world would be extremely happy if they could do away entirely with the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian religion. If they could do away with the Christian religion entirely everything would be nice with the world. They wouldn't miss it a bit. In fact, they would rejoice over it because the Christian religion condemns the world. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit.

Our Lord also tell us through John the world hate the Christian religion. It puts the finger of conviction upon our sin. And therefore, the world does not like the Christian religion and the world doesn't like Christians who stand for our Lord. Of course, the ideal relationship is to have a relationship with the world like our Lord did -- to be hated by the world but to have the world have to confess that there was nothing really legitimate in our hatred of him. "This man hath done nothing amiss," the thief on the cross said. Pilot said, "I find no fault in him at all." So the ideal for a Christian is to be hated by the world but to have the world grudgingly say -- well, have to say this, "He does live a righteous kind of life."

So the Lord says, "The time is coming when you're going to weep and lament, the world shall rejoice, you shall be sorrowful, but (he adds) your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Now, I'd like for you to notice that little expression "turned into you" because in the original text it suggests since it is literally "your sorrow shall become joy" that the very thing that causes the sorrow is the same thing, the identical thing that causes the joy. In other words, it is not so much that sorrow is replaced by joy but the sorrow itself becomes joy.

Now, if we're speaking about the death of Christ, as our Lord is, one can understand his comment because the death is that which is going to bring sorrow to the apostles. But it is the death in which they will ultimately rejoice because they will come to see that the death which caused them sorrow on the physical natural level is on the spiritual level the foundation of their deliverance from guilt and condemnation of sin, and the foundation of their right entitled to eternal life. So the very thing over which they are sorrowful becomes the thing over which they are happy and joyous. So, "Your sorrow shall become joy."

Now, the Lord illustrates with a common figure and it is the illustration of a woman who gives birth to a child. "A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour has come. But as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world." Now, you notice it says joy over a man being born. But I know that some of you think I'm a male chauvinist pig, and probably you have some justification for that. I'm trying to overcome my weakness. But I must confess as a New Testament student that the term for man here is a generic term. It really means what we would say "a human being". So those lovely little females are just as much a cause of joy as that obstreperous male. [Laughter]

Now, he says, "A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour has come. But as soon as she has delivered the child she doesn't remember the pain any longer because of the joy that a human being has been born." Of course, the purpose of the pain is the birth. And then when the birth takes place then the result is joy. And the illustration is a rather beautiful illustration on two levels. Of course, the thing that is pain is the very thing that causes the joy. So the pain of the childbirth resulting in the birth of the child is both the cause for pain and it's a cause for joy. And so the Lord Jesus says it's like that.

Malwunest [phonetic spelling] was a student of the Old Testament, would remember that in the Old Testament the ministry of the Messiah who was to come is often likened to a woman who is giving birth. And the reason for that is that at the second coming of the Lord Jesus there is going to be great birth pangs over the whole of human experience. But the result of it will be the new birth

and the glorious kingdom of God. And so this is the foundation of it; the Lord Jesus as the mediatorial king. And the travail pangs of the Messiah, which the Jewish people spoke about, is the very basis upon which there shall come the magnificent glorious kingdom of God upon the earth.

Now, our Lord having given the illustration gives the application. And this is what I would like to lay a little bit of stress on. You'll notice that the application of the figure is an application that we may divide into several matters. In the first place, in verse 22 he speaks of a new joy. Well, we could say "with joy perpetual" because it's permanent. "Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. Someone might say, "But Lord, when will this take place?" Different answers have been given by students and I can only, for the sake of time, say that it's probably not a reference to the second coming and it's probably not a reference to the day of Pentecost. It probably is a reference to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The two words "to rejoice" then to "see him" are found in chapter 20 and verse 20 in the resurrection accounts where John writes, "And when he had so said he showed unto them his hands and his side." And then John adds, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

So when he says in verse 22, "I will see you again, your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man takes from you," that's probably a reference to the resurrection. And now, the apostles should be beginning to understand what he meant when he said, "A little time and you will not see me and a little while you shall see me." The little while in which they will not see him is three days in which he has died. He's been placed in the grave and on the third day he arises from the grave. This is John's way of saying, "On the third day he will rise again." It's a little while for John. It's on the third day for the synoptic writers. And they will rejoice at that time.

Now but one might ask, "What does he mean when he says that you shall rejoice and your joy no man shall take from you?" I began this morning by saying that Christianity is a personal relationship to the Lord. One of the characteristics of Christianity is this personal joy and our Lord speaks of it here as if it's a perpetual kind of joy. One wonders really if we are giving the proper

testimony to others if there is not a sense of joy about us. That's what our Lord promises. "Your heart shall rejoice, your joy no man taketh from you."

Many years ago I read an article of one of the first interviews that a reporter had with Billy Graham. It was in about 1950 or 1951 in the Southern Presbyterian Journal. I did clip it out. I wish I had. I'd like to go back one of these days and look it up and copy it out. But I just remember the flavor of the article. The reporter was a reporter for the Atlanta Journal. He described his personal experience with this new young evangelist who had had a striking series of meetings in California and had made a little bit of a name for himself. And he describes how he went in and talked with him. And he said, "The greatest impression that I had was the impression of joy that Mr. Graham seemed to experience. And furthermore, that when I left that interview," he said, "I must confess that I had the feeling that someone else had been in the room with me during the interview." I don't know whether Porter was a Christian or whether that was just his non-Christian feeling that there was something spiritual, something about the presence of God that had touched during that particular thing. But it reminded me of a statement of Randall Harris who said, "They may tear the volume to shreds but they can never rub off the light of God from the face of his people." A true Christian has a personal relationship with Lord that inevitably issues in personal joy. That does not mean, of course, that we do not have struggles and trials.

Dr. Packer was certainly right in one of his meetings when he laid stress upon the fact that the New Testament never teaches us that we are without struggles. The idea that we may pass out of Romans 7 into Romans 8 and leave the struggles behind is a non-biblical idea, although it began rather popular and is rather popular in some circles. We may have joy. We may have victory, but we always have struggle. And the Lord is not denying that fact. He's simply saying that in the midst of our struggles he gives a joy that cannot be taken away. That's what my preacher friend George Renny has. He has in the midst of the most trying of circumstances terminal cancer -- painful terminal cancer. He has a joy that enables him not only to say and express his praise of the Lord but to carry on his ministry. Amazing. I hope I'm able to do something like that.

So it's a perpetual joy. It's the thing that distinguishes a Christian from a non-Christian. We have this permanent joy. The kids sing "Joy, joy, joy, deep down in our hearts". That's a valid thing. That's something that is given to believers and I hope it characterizes all of us who attend the chapel. Furthermore, Jesus goes on to say not only do we have perpetual joy but we have a relationship as a result of his death and resurrection that is paternal. That is, we have a heavenly Father.

Notice what he says in the 23rd verse, "And in that day you shall ask me no questions." "Now, you've been asking me questions. You've been questioning me all during our ministry." No doubt they'd ask him many many questions. But the Lord Jesus says, "In that day you're not going to be asking me questions. I tell you truly, truly whatsoever you shall ask the father in my name he will give it to you." In other words, there is a milestone in the mediatorial work that is soon to take place. The Lord Jesus came to carry out his ministry as prophet -- to carry out his ministry as priest. And his ministry as priest is to offer the atoning sacrifice. And so he will come and he will offer the atoning sacrifice and as a result of the atoning sacrifice the covenant is consummated, the promises -- the covenantal promises given through the Old Testament -- reach their culmination in the blood of the cross. And the people of God are united to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the covenantal mediator, and now as a people of God we are related by the Lord Jesus to the Father. That was his purpose -- to bring a people of God into relationship to the Father. The Father gave him a people and he has given them to the Father to keep for him, and he is the head of the people of God. We're going to come into union with the Lord God in a way that will mean that no longer will we be asking him questions but in our Lord's mind his mediatorial work reaches the stage where we now have the privilege of asking our heavenly Father and receiving from him.

Now, he taught them of course to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." He said, "I want you to pray after this manner." Isn't it striking that prayer, so far as we know, was never prayed. But now he said, "The time has come in which you shall ask the Father in my name," that is in the name of the mediator because we only stand by virtue of what Christ has done. But by virtue of what Christ has done we do stand.

Now, this is an interesting thing. The Lord Jesus in his ministry has sought to relate us to the father. And if you'll read over in John chapter 20 and verse 17 we read these words, "Following the resurrection the Lord Jesus said to Mary, 'Mary, don't touch me for I am not yet ascended to my father. But go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my father and your father, and to my God and your God.'" Now, the Lord Jesus makes a distinction between the way in which the father is his father and the way in which he is our father, and the way in which he is his God and the way in which he is our God because there is a distinction between us. But nevertheless, he points out that now our relationship is with the father and he is happiest when we have this personal relationship with the father.

The Apostle Paul writing in Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 18 says, "For through him," that is through Christ, "we both have access." Both Jew and Gentile have access by one spirit unto the father. And then in 1 Peter chapter 3 and verse 18 the Apostle Peter, no doubt building upon what he heard in the upper room says, "For Christ also hath one suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." So the work of the Lord Jesus is to accomplish the atoning sacrifice as high priest in order that the people of God might be brought to the Father. And we no longer ask him questions but we're brought to a father and we have the privilege of offering our petitions to him.

Someone has said that the proper study of mankind is man. Well, there is a sense in which of course that has truth. It is important for us to understand man. But the Scriptures let us know that we can never really understand man if we do not understand God because in understanding God we truly come to understand man, man's needs, man's sin, man's possibility of glorification through the work of Jesus Christ. And it's certainly true to say that when we begin to study God then our whole lives are transformed. There is nothing more significant than the study of God. To me one of the saddest things is to see a young person become so involved in the study of -- we'll just put in there any of our human occupations; medicine, law, engineering, history, philosophy, art. Just put in anything you like -- to become so involved in the study of these things that the supreme object of

man becomes secondary, tertiary, neglected. That's sad. There is nothing that so enlarges the mind as the study of God. One can best understand -- medicine, law, art, philosophy, history, science, engineering -- when one understands it in the light of the divine truth. The study of God -- that's an ennobling thing.

The purpose of our Lord's coming was to bring us to the Father that we should enjoy that relationship to him that is an improvement of the mind. And that's not to speak of the way in which God through the ministry that he has to us as father consoles us in all of the experiences of life. Mr. Spurgeon puts it this way, "Then go plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest seas. Be lost in his immensity and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul, so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief, so speak peace to the winds of trial as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead." So the Lord's purpose was to introduce us to the Father, a relationship that is paternal.

Now finally he says, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name?" Isn't that interesting? Up to this point they've asked nothing in his name for the simple reason that it was not possible for them to do that for he must offer the atoning sacrifice as priest. So they have not asked anything in his name yet as their mediatorial head. But now he says, "Ask and ye shall receive. And your joy shall be fulfilled." Answered prayer leads to fulfilled joy. Why? Well, for the simple reason that when a person's prayers are answered he has the assurance that God is truly Immanuel: a God with us. Nothing is more consolatory, to us Mr. Spurgeon's word; nothing is more wonderful than to be able to receive an answered petition from the Lord God. Let me give you a couple of illustrations. They're just human illustrations. There are many that could be given. You could probably give some from your own experience as a Christian no doubt.

There's a remarkable testimony which occurred some years ago in connection with Columbia Bible College in Columbia, South Carolina. Dr. Robert McQuicken, a man whom I knew, was president of the school and they had wanted to buy a large building and construct a men's dormitory. And they had put the amount of the money need before the Lord and the amount to begin the

construction or to make the purchase had come in. And then they had certain payments that they were to meet year by year. They had to pay \$10,000 dollars on October the first of this year and as that date drew near it was obvious they didn't have that much. And on finally the last day of September, the 30th of September, they looked at their books and they saw that they lacked \$2121.21. Twenty-one, twenty-one, twenty-one. And so they took it to the Lord in prayer.

And I always think of the time that Dr. Ironside told us that he came to Dallas Seminary for his several weeks of meetings that he used to have every year -- and Dr. Chafer was the president then. And he came in and sat down in the morning prayer meeting and someone had given him a check for \$500 dollars as he left Chicago to come down here. And Dr. Chafer had the prayer meeting and he arrived and they were making just a little comment about the fact that they need \$500 dollars. And Dr. Ironside had the check for \$500 dollars in his pocket but he had not yet given it to them. And he didn't say anything and said they went to prayer. And he said, "They all prayed that the Lord would meet the need." And he said, "I prayed with more confidence than I had ever prayed in all my life for the \$500 dollars." [Laughter]

Well at any rate, at the beginning of the day they needed \$2121.21 and so they had a little box at the Bible college that voluntary contributions were put in. And so they went to the box to look what was in the box and it was \$21.21. They still lacked \$2100 dollars. And so during the day they began -- they were very interested in the mail that came in and any other gifts. And a gift for a hundred dollars came in and one gift for \$500 dollars came in. And at the end of the day they had received \$2121.22. And one said, "What a wonderful bookkeeper God is. He met every need that we have and gave us one cent towards next year's \$10,000 dollars." [Laughter]

The most remarkable answer to prayer I think I've ever heard was an answer to prayer that George Mueller had. Mr. Mueller as you know was -- I've spoken of him a number of times. He was the founder and director of the Bristol Orphanage -- famous orphanage. Mr. Mueller was an outstanding Christian man and he was a man who believed that when you were a Christian you had the right to trust the Lord. And he conceived that of spiritual things in this way, that if God has

called us to do a work he will supply the needs. And if he has called us we may expect him to supply the needs and we have no need whatsoever to appeal to men because he has called this work into existence. So that's what he did. For years he fed hundreds and literally thousands because at one time the number in the orphanage was up in the thousands. Many experiences they had -- sometimes the noon meal would be drawing near and they'd have nothing. And several times the local baker would come by with yesterday's food and stop at the door and give them, and they would be able to sit down and enjoy the meal.

And Mr. Mueller was coming to the United States after he'd been a minister for many years. He was a Bible teacher and preacher, a very gifted man. He had served the Lord for fifty-seven years and he was on a boat coming to the United States. Now, Mr. Charles Calman said that he was going to the United States and the captain of the steamer told him a rather interesting story. He said, "You know, in our preceding trip I came with a man by the name of George Mueller. And we were crossing the Atlantic and a tremendous fog arose and we just could not see our way at all." And he said, "I had an experience with this man Mueller that I'll never forget." He said, "One afternoon Mr. Mueller came to me and he said, 'Captain, I've come to tell you that I've got to be in Quebec Saturday afternoon.' I said to him," the captain told Mr. Calman, "'That's impossible.' 'Well, very well,' Mr. Mueller said, 'if the ship cannot take me God will find some other way. I've never broken an engagement in fifty-seven years and I don't want to break this one. Let's go down into the chart room and pray.'"

So the captain went down in the chart room but he said, "You know, I looked at this man of God and thought to myself, 'What lunatic asylum can that man have come from?' I never heard of such a thing as getting down to pray that this fog may leave in order that he may make an appointment in Quebec." So he said, "I said to Mr. Mueller, 'Mr. Mueller, do you know how dense this fog is?' He said, 'No, I really don't. But my eye is not on the fog. My eye is on the Lord God and he controls all the circumstances of life and he controls fogs.'" He said, "We got down on our knees." And he said, "You know, he prayed a very simple prayer; just a few lines. And then I got

ready to pray and he put his hand over on me and he said, 'Now, there's no need for you to pray. First of all, you don't believe that God answers prayer evidently. And secondly, I do believe he does and I've already prayed and there's no need for you to pray.'" [Laughter] That's confidence. And the captain said -- well, Mr. Mueller went on and said further to him. He said, "Captain, he said I've known the Lord for fifty-seven years and there's never been a single day that I've failed to get an audience with the king. Get up captain. Open the door and you'll find the fog is gone." So the captain got up, and he opened the door and the fog was gone. And Mr. Mueller was in Quebec on Saturday afternoon. That was a testimony of the captain of the steamer.

Now, that is answered prayer. I can imagine that Mr. Mueller had a sense of rather deep Christian joy when he got to Quebec and he thought of his experience. And I think also he must have had a smile over the consternation of the captain. [Laughter] Well, I'm not suggesting that these experiences should characterize our everyday life. But after all, the Lord Jesus does say does he not, "Hitherto you've asked nothing in my name. Ask and you shall receive, and your joy will be fulfilled."

Dr. Chafer used to tell us expounding John 15 as I mentioned to you before that in our Lord's statement concerning union we would have joy celestial, prayer effectual, fruit perpetual. Well, there's very much of that here. The Lord Jesus promises a new joy. Have we realized it? Does it really characterize us? Do we have this personal relationship with him? He's promised a new relationship. Have we recognized that? Do we realize that we have a father and he is to be the object of our meditation and contemplation, and our insurance business is secondary? And there is this marvelous new promise of answered prayer. And have we exercised that? Do we take advantage of it? Those answered prayers will bring a note, and an experience, and a disposition of joy that will make a Christian life worth living, and vital and marvelous. May we all have.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these marvelous promises that the Lord Jesus gave the apostles; that kind of joy that only the Holy Spirit can truly bring, the relationship

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accomplished through the blood of Christ our mediator, and the promises of answered prayer and of personal communion. O God, enable us by Thy grace to have a true Christian experience of these marvelous blessings. If there should be some here who have never believed in the Lord Jesus may by Thy grace they be brought to acknowledge their sin of...

[RECORDING ENDED ABRUPTLY]