



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 19:16-24

"The Father in the Cross"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now we are turning this morning to John chapter 19 for our Scripture reading. And we are reading verse 16 through verse 24, John chapter 19 verse 16 through verse 24. Now the Lord Jesus has appeared before Pilate, before Herod, and then back again before Pilate. And in the 15th verse the chief priests have said, "We have no king but Caesar." And so our Lord now has to be delivered over to them by Pilate, delivered over evidently because he accepted the judgment that he had contended that he was another king. And therefore Pilate evidently felt that it at least had a measure of legality to deliver him over for the crime of insurrection or sedition.

The nation of Israel, however, wished to condemn him for blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God. So Rome and Jerusalem unite in the crucifixion of our Lord. And the Apostle John writes in the 16th verse,

"Then delivered he (that is Pilate) him therefore unto them (that is the chief priests) to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew (And that of course means Aramaic) Golgotha: Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF

THE JEWS. (It was incidentally customary for individuals who were crucified to have a form of accusation written. Occasionally the accusation would be placed on the body of the individual. Sometimes in the head of the procession as they went out to be crucified would be the accusation. And then it was not uncommon to have the accusation placed above the cross, a white background and either black or red letters would contain the accusation. And in this case it was, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." And we read then in verse 20,) This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city. (Now let me just say this as something of an aside, this text in the original text lays a bit more stress on the relationship of the place of the crucifixion to the city. And in fact literally the words probably should be rendered, "The place of the city where Jesus was crucified was near. In other words, just a little more stress on the nearness of the place of crucifixion and the city itself, as if John were anxious to draw attention to the connection between the crucifixion and the city of Jerusalem.) And it was written in Hebrew (that is Aramaic), and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. (Now we'll say a little bit more about this, but at this point one might ask, why did Pilate insist since he seems to be an individual who seems to be willing to sit on the fence so easily. And evidently the reason that he wanted to keep that sign as it was, and furthermore not simply that he said he was the King of the Jews was simply for legal purposes. That was the basis upon which our Lord was condemned legally according to Roman law. He was contending that he was the King of the Jews. And so Pilate would like to hide behind that. And so he would not allow to be put there, "He said that he was the king of the Jews." This was his claim.) Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat (Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. And let me just say this that it was the perquisite of the people who carried out the crucifixion to have the possessions of the person who was being crucified. So the soldiers rightly took the garments of our Lord. The only thing that they left was the inner tunic, and that is what it means to be naked. It did not mean that

there was not a stitch of clothing on our Lord but the tunic, the inner tunic corresponding to our underwear was left. But the outer garments, the headdress, any kind of neck piece, or shoulder or chest garment, and then the robe and the sandals, all of these things were divided. And the robe which was seamless, that was the garment for which lots were cast. And verse 24): now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did."

Now, I won't say much about that specific thing, but as you can see, this is a citation from the Old Testament from Psalm 22, the Messianic Psalm. And John sees in this the fulfillment of that passage; the separation of the garments, the giving of the raiment to the soldiers, and the casting of lots for the vesture of our Lord. May the Lord bless the reading of his word. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we are grateful to Thee that we are able to gather on this morning, this beautiful morning and open the Scriptures and consider the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. And in this season of the year when we think very seriously about the birth our Lord, we ask Lord, that Thou wilt not let us forget that the incarnation of the Lord Jesus was for the purpose of his crucifixion and resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father, the giving forth of the Holy Spirit and all of the other blessings that have flowed from the shedding of the blood.

We thank Thee for the complete submission of the Son of God to the Father and we pray, Lord, that something of that same submission may characterize the saints of God. We thank Thee for the day in which we live and for the opportunity to proclaim the gospel in our day. And Lord, we give Thee thanks for our country and we pray Thy blessing upon our President, upon the United States of America, Lord give guidance and direction to our leaders in Washington. We pray for the

whole body of Christ, the church. We thank Thee, Lord, for the way in which Thou hast saved them and guided them into the four corners of the earth to give testimony to the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ.

And we pray that Thou will sustain all of the saints of God today. Built them up in their faith and bless those who minister the word of God to the glory of Jesus' name. And Father we pray for this assembly and for its ministry; its ministry in the Sunday School, in the Bible classes, through the week, in the tape ministry, in the radio ministry, in the publications ministries, the various forms of ministry, Lord, we pray that Thy hand may be upon them for spiritual good. We pray Thy blessing upon the ministry of the Chapel, the friends and visitors that are here this morning.

We especially, Lord, remember those who have been suffering and some who are bereaved. Give consolation and comfort. Supply out of the wonderful mercy and grace that Thou hast for us, that which is lacking in the lives of some who have lost loved ones. We thank Thee and praise Thee for the promises of God. And we look, Lord, to Thee to make good Thy promises in the lives of the believers. And we pray Thy blessing upon us in this meeting and in the meeting this evening. May the Lord Jesus Christ and his salvation be lifted up. May we be responsive to the word of God and may we be different at the end of this day. We commit these meetings to Thee and this meeting now in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] We have been looking in the exposition of the Gospel of John at that section of the gospel in which the Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ is sinking deeper, ever deeper, into his passion. We have noticed in the preceding chapter, the 18th chapter, that at the trial of our Lord in verse 22 when our Lord had spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so." And then in chapter 19 and verse 16 in the beginning of the section that we have read for today we read that Pilate delivered our Lord over to the chief priests in order to be crucified. And then, of course, in the conclusion of this section we read of our Lord being on the cross.

Now, you will notice that we have our Lord in a sense an outlaw, for he is slapped across the face before his trial is over. Then he is condemned. Secondly and finally he is put on the tree. Now that is an illegal order of things. You probably have noticed that. A person should ordinarily be condemned, the cursed or put under judgment, and then regarded as an outlaw. It's almost as if God grants in his providence the Son of God less rights than an Achan or a Korah.

Most studies of the passion of our Lord stress the human side of his suffering. And of course there is a very real point in that, because our Lord did suffer as the Son of man. The shame, for example, is stressed; the scourging by the soldiers, the shedding of the blood on the cross; and the shedding of the blood from the crown of thorns; the spitting that took place; all of the evidences of the disregarding of the claims of our Lord are stressed.

Now there is not question but that humans were active in the death of our Lord. On the day of Pentecost when Peter preaches his great sermon at the inauguration of the era in which we live, he said, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you. As ye yourselves also know, him being delivered by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken and with wicked hands have crucified and slain." So we are not denying at all that men were very active in the death of our Lord. But it is God who is especially active in the death of our Lord.

For example, if we turn to the Old Testament and we read the Old Testament carefully we come to statements like this. In this same Messianic Psalm, the 22nd Psalm cited here in verse 24 we read these words, "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death," a reference to the Father ultimately in the typical Psalm. "Thou hast brought me to the dust of death." And then even more clearly in the 53rd chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, we read the prophet saying with reference to the Lord and his attitude toward the servant of Jehovah, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." It pleased Jehovah to bruise the suffering servant of Jehovah. So when we talk about the activity of men in the crucifixion of the Lord, we should not forget that back behind the activity of men is the activity of the sovereign God. And Peter in those remarks that I read just a moment ago illustrates that,

because it is he who says, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have with wicked hands taken and crucified." So when we speak about the sufferings of our Lord, let us not forget that the primary motivating person behind the sufferings of our Lord is the Father in heaven. Because the program and purpose of the triune God is coming to one of its great climaxes in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, what I would like to do this morning as we look at these verses from verse 16 to verse 24 is to lay stress on that side of our Lord's suffering. We'll talk about Messiah crucified in verse 16 through verse 18. And then Messiah entitled verse 19 through verse 22. We have the town crier who is illustrating these points as I make them. [Laughter] And third, we have the Messiah disrobed in verse 23 and verse 24. I think the Lord prepared me for all kinds of disturbances by having me preach out in the country west of Dallas toward Fort Worth for the first two or three years of my preaching. I had a vast congregation of about fifteen people, and one family had five children so they made up about half of the congregation. And they always had an infant. We had no nursery so the infant was in the service all the time. And he was one of the loudest infants I've ever known. And he usually began crying with the singing, which encouraged me a bit. Ordinarily children are more discerning and start crying with the message. [Laughter] But this infant was absolutely undiscerning, began crying with the singing and usually cried right through the service. So I got so I just did not notice and went on. So those things don't disturb me, but I know there are some of you who do get disturbed.

Now Messiah crucified verse 16 through verse 18. "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away." They, of course, is a reference to the chief priests who take the lead in this. But I would like for you to notice first of all that there is a combination of responsibility for the suffering of our Lord. There is on the one hand Pilate who should have freed our Lord because he could find no fault in him. And then of course there were the chief priests who were anxious to have our Lord condemned for blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God. Now, do not forget that this was the Passover time, and it was the time at which

the Passover lamb should be slain. And so here we have the chief priests or Jerusalem on one hand and Pilate the prefect of Judaea or Rome on the other hand and they are uniting in offering up God's Passover lamb. Here we come to the fulfillment of all of the teaching of the Old Testament concerning the Passover, as Paul later will say, "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us." And so Rome and Jerusalem unite unwittingly in offering up the Passover lamb, which is slain for the sins of sinners. Oh the irony of the situation.

Now secondly we read, "And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull." Generally speaking when we think about our Lord's journey from the palace of Pilate out to Golgotha we think of the stations of the cross. This has been made traditional through the centuries of Christian thought. And of course, there is a sense in which all of that is valid. But I'd like to suggest something else to you in addition to that. It is true, it was the sad way, and the Via Dolorosa which means simply "The sad way" was more than simply a sad way. Because you see, the Lord Jesus is also the sin offering of the Old Testament.

Now let me remind you in case you haven't read Leviticus chapter 4 recently of what that chapter says with reference to the sin offering. When certain sins were committed it was the responsibility of Israelites to bring a sin offering. Now when they brought the sin offering to the priest, the priest was responsible to slay the animal. And then he was responsible to divide the animal, generally speaking, into two parts. One part would be burned in the area of the tabernacle. And the other part was to be taken outside the camp and there burned in the place of rejection. In fact, it is almost typical of hellfire, the place of rejection.

Now what is striking about the sin offering is this, that the separation of the animal into the two general parts was a separation of those parts of the animal that were the nicer parts of the animal. And those parts, especially the fat which was particularly marked out as being one of the better parts of the animal, that part of the animal was burned in the tabernacle on the altar outside the tabernacle itself, the altar of burnt offering. Now the term that is used in the Old Testament in Leviticus chapter 4 and verse 10 is a term from which the Hebrew word incense comes. And so it

was burned as incense. Now, that of course is pushing it a little bit, but the point is it was burned and the smell of that part of the animal that goes up in the smoke is typically well pleasing to the Lord, because it is expressive of the devotion and dedication of the antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, to the will of God. So that part of the sin offering is the part of the offering that represents the dedication of the Lord Jesus.

The other part of the offering, however, contains those parts of the animal that were not very pleasant parts. And in fact, specifically mentioned, and I mention this only because it's in the word of God, specifically mentioned in the other parts of the animal is the fact that the dung was part of that part of the offering. Now, that part of the offering was taken outside the camp because it represents rejection. It represents all that is displeasing to God. It represents our sin. And that is burned outside the camp. The Lord Jesus, you'll remember, outside the camp; a token of his rejection by religion in the city. So he was as an outlaw to suffer, and the sin offering contained those parts of the animal that were filled with what we would call a stench. So I'd like to suggest to you that the way of the cross, the sad way, was also a way of the stench. And if we can think of the fact that those disagreeable parts of the sin offering as they were carried forth outside the camp, if we can remember that then we have a picture of what our Lord Jesus was judicially as the sin sacrifice for sinners. So let us not forget that the sad way is also the way of the stench. And let us not be afraid to say it, the sad way is the way of the stench because of our sin. That is what is represented by those parts of the animal that produce a stench. It is really our sin.

You see, God is very, very forthright and frank in laying stress on what we are. We shall see more of that in just a moment. Now we read also in verse 18 where they crucified him and two others with him, on either side one and Jesus in the midst. Isn't it striking that the Lord Jesus when he came into the world as a little infant, over which we make so much, lay amid the Magi, the shepherds, the angels, but going out of this world he hangs between two common criminals. He hangs between bandits. He hangs between robbers. He hangs between insurrectionists. Well the terms that are described describe the two men, one of whom later became a believer in a remarkable

way; these terms express the fact of our Lord's identification with sinners as he hangs upon the cross. In fact, Isaiah 53, remember, said, "He was numbered among the transgressors."

And Luke, when he describes the suffering of our Lord, he points to that text specifically and says, "That text finds fulfillment when our Lord hangs in the midst of the robbers on the cross. It's almost as if God purposely reached down into the lowest layers of our society to which sin gave birth in order to humble our pride, to make us realize that our representative hangs there in the midst of robbers and thieves under the judgment of God as our representative. In other words, that's what we are in the sight of God. "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be called the righteousness of God in him." Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us. Just as it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangs upon a tree." It was no accident that Jesus was crucified in the midst of criminals. It was, as someone has said, his inevitable company. Because you see, it is we who are represented there.

Now that's Messiah crucified. Let's notice now the reference that John makes to the entitling of the cross. It was the custom, as I mentioned in the Scripture reading, to affix a title to the cross. And we read in the 19th verse, "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Now the Jews knew Pilate did not believe this. And they suspected that Pilate was really mocking them when he put on the cross, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." They knew he didn't believe that. And they knew also that he knew that they didn't believe that. But he insisted on putting it there. And they felt, not simply, that this was a false claim, but they felt that Pilate was mocking them, and so they said, Pilate don't write "The King of the Jews" but write that he said he was the King of the Jews. But Pilate insisted because he wanted to protect, evidently, the legal claim that he might have offered for the crucifixion of this innocent man. And he replies, "What I have written, I have written."

But now, it doesn't take much of a spiritual mind to see that that text says a great deal more than what Pilate himself thought that it said. We noticed last time, I believe, the remarkable statements that Pilate makes. It's amazing; some of the finest statements in the whole of the New

Testament which have rung down through the ages for us were uttered by Pontius Pilate, the prefect of Judaea. "What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?" "Behold the man." "Behold your King." "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Anybody who reads the New Testament notices the impact of those statements.

Now when Pilate said, "Behold the man," of course he simply meant, "Here is the man who claims that he's the king of the Jews." Or "This is the man that you wish to crucify." But from the standpoint of the divine person behind all of this who providentially is guiding these incidents so that he shall be delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God means far more than simply, "Behold the man." This is the last Adam. This is representative man. This is the man who has come to be the sacrifice for the sins of man.

And then when Pilate says, "Behold your king," ah, God meant a great deal more than simply what Pilate meant. Pilate meant simply, "Here is the person who claims to be the King of the Jews." This is the kind of king you have. But God behind Pilate, when Pilate uttered, "Behold your king," God intends for us to make the connection between the Lord Jesus Christ and all of the Messianic promises of the Old Testament that point to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant in the great seed of Abraham. So when he says, "What I have written, I have written," ah Pilate, you think that what you have written, you have written. And in the human sense, yes you gave the order and your servants have inscribed the cross. But writing above you and through you is the eternal God. And so it is he who has truly written. And really Pilate in one sense we could say, "What you have written, you have not really written."

And now we read also that this was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. The universality of the appeal of the cross is stressed. We have been stressing this as we have gone through the Gospel of John pointing out that generally speaking in the Gospel of John when the term world is used it is a reference to the Jew and to the Gentiles. And here in the cross we see the universality again of the appeal of the ministry of the Lord Jesus. That superscription was written in Hebrew, or Aramaic, and Greek, and Latin; in the language of the land of Palestine, in the language

of the world, and in the language of jurisprudence. In the language of the land, in the language of Greece, the language of the world, and in the language of law, Roman jurisprudence; in the language of Zion, Hebrew, in the language of the Acropolis Greek, and in the language of the forum Rome; in the language of religion or Jerusalem, in the language of culture Greece, and in the language of power, Rome. In other words, the Gentile powers combine with the Jewish power or the power of the ancient religion to crucify their own Messianic Messiah, King, Lamb of God.

Now finally, Messiah disrobed. Verse 23 and verse 24. "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout." At the time of Christmas we generally pay a great deal of attention to the clothes in which the Lord Jesus Christ was swaddled in the manger. We say "This say shall be a sign to you. You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." And we lay a great deal of stress upon that and everybody has their little crèches and their various other things at Christmas time. I'm not complaining in any way about that. That's one of the human aspects of our Lord's life and ministry that it is perfectly legitimate to stress. But I would like to just suggest to you that we often overlook something that is just as significant. We pay attention to the birth, the manger clothes, but we don't often pay nearly so much attention to the death at this time of year as we ought. And to the, let me put it this way, to the cross nakedness. Both are providential. Both are the works of God. Both are signs.

When the angel told the shepherds, "This shall be a sign to you, you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." That was a Messianic sign. Now, I've often said to you, in fact not long ago I said to you that it would be impossible for anyone to write a paragraph of the word of God and get it accepted in the Bible. I don't know of anyone who has attempted to do that. I know many, many scores of professional theologians and professors or Old and New Testament who like to feel that they are able to criticize the Bible and tell us what is genuine in the word of God and what is not genuine. They've never really demonstrated their ability to do that, to my mind. And I've often thought that the greatest challenge to them would be if you

know so much about what is genuine and what is not genuine, could you not write something that might be called genuine, so I could understand how you are able to judge this.

No one's been able to do this, of course, nor would anyone have the effrontery to try to do it. There have been attempts, incidentally, to copy Paul's letters. And we do have an ancient document, the Epistle to the Laodiceans, because Paul in Colossians makes reference to a letter from the Laodiceans. And since there is no particular letter to the Laodiceans back in the early ages of the Christian centuries, someone forged a little letter called a letter to the Laodiceans. But as you might expect, I used to read it to my students in New Testament introduction and they always laughed. That was their response. Now, the striking thing about it is they laughed because the letter to the Laodiceans, that forgery, incidentally it did get into some of the early German Bibles. It was originated in the 5th or 6th century. But they always laugh because the letter to the Laodiceans is mainly a stringing together of clauses and phrases from well-known Pauline epistles. In other words, there isn't anything that is unique about it which would cause one to think it's genuine, except that they are copies of things that Paul has written.

Now I'm going to give you a little verse of Scripture which I'm going to suggest might be added to the word of God. It seems strange after I've told you all of this. It's impossible, and now I'm going to do it for you. But you see, what often happened in the tradition of the New Testament manuscripts is this. Back in the early days when scribes copied -- I always liked the cartoon I saw, maybe ten years ago, when Xerox first came out with a copying machine. There was a picture in one of the old monasteries of monks who were sitting behind a desk and there was a wall like this wall here. And there were about a half a dozen monks who were at little carols and they were all copying. And one of them turns back and speaks to the other one and says, "There must be a better way of doing this."

And what usually happened was this, when they copied, of course, they made mistakes. They sometimes wrote a word twice when it should have been written once. They sometimes omitted words because the preceding word ended in a certain way. And then as they took their eyes

off the page and wrote they looked back and instead of looking at the specific place where they were copying. They skipped to another word, which has the same kind of ending and something is left out; all of their technical words for all of this. And I know you would not like to have them just before lunch or before dinner anyway. One of the ways in which variant readings came to be in the manuscripts was because a scribe would be copying a manuscript, particularly in the gospels. And he would know that in another gospel a certain thing was said. And so he would write in the margin of the manuscript another phrase or clause or sentence. And then as these manuscripts were copied, another later scribe would look at this. And since it was also customary to add something correctly to a manuscript by putting it in the margin and making a little note where it belonged, a scribe would look at this page and see something in the margin and he would say, "Well, evidently that should be in the text." And so he would copy it into the text. And so the gloss would become a part of the text. We have many instances of that in the tradition of the New Testament manuscripts.

Now, I'm going to suggest to you a statement of Scripture that might, if we were able to live eight or nine hundred years from now and if the Lord has not come. I don't think that's possible or probable, but nevertheless if it were possible, and if this could be copied long enough, someone would say, "You know, that sounds like Scripture. And I think it ought to be in the Bible." I'm doing this with a smile. I hope you see this. But this is what I would like to say. That right here, where we read about the Lord Jesus being naked, I would like to suggest to you that something like this might be written in at this point. Now, I'd have to word it in such a way that maybe that would give it all away. But remember the statement, "This shall be a sign unto you, you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." So I'm going to suggest that the text that might be inserted is, "This shall be a sign unto us, we shall find the surety and the mediator robbed of his clothes and hanging on a tree." "We shall find the surety, the mediator, robbed of his clothes and hanging on a tree." Copy that in the margin, it's not genuine, but sooner or later five hundred years from now some fellow looks at it and he says, "That surely does express the truth." The mediator is one who is known as one who is hanging on a tree naked.

Now, why should that be accepted perhaps as a true comment on Scripture? Well let me remind you of what is said here. We read in verse 23 the soldiers took his garments. That was their right. They took the garments off of our Lord. He was left with nothing but the inner tunic. He was naked in their terms. That was permitted by the regulations. And what this is designed to represent by God is the spiritual poverty of those for whom the Messiah stands. Let me remind you of a text of Scripture, 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 9, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. So the first thing that I want you to notice is that the fact that the Lord Jesus died naked is a picture of the spiritual poverty of the cross. As Guido Gazelle has said, "All rights denied, naked, Christ died."

But now there is more to it than that and something far more significant to me, the deepest reference our Lord's naked death is the reference that this makes to the second and third chapters of the Bible. Remember in Genesis chapter 2 at the close of the chapter that describes the creation of the woman and also describes the details of man's creation. We read in Genesis chapter 2 and verse 25, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife and were not ashamed." And then in the third chapter we read the story of the temptation and the fall of Eve and then Adam. And then in the seventh verse we read, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked."

Now here is an interesting thing. Adam and Eve were created. They did not have any clothes, and yet while they were naked they were not ashamed. But after they have sinned they suddenly look at themselves in their lost innocence, and they see the shame of their skin reflected in their own sin. And also evidently, because Scripture makes this quite plain later, they incidentally have evidence of their exposure to judgment and so they seek to quickly cover themselves with their fig leaves. All representative, of course, of all of the human attempts to cover our guilt for our sin. Religion, good works, or the whole gamut of things, the ordinances of the Christian church, the religion of Judaism, all of the kinds of religious things designed to cover our essential guilt.

Now I'd like for you to notice that the sin brought not simply guilt but it brought a sense of shame, and remorse, and reproach. Now, that is part of the effect of sin. Jude speaks of raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame. Daniel in the Old Testament in the 12th chapter of his book and the second verse writes, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. So sin brings guilt. But sin brings more than guilt. Sin brings reproach. Sin brings shame. And the Lord Jesus hangs on the cross at Calvary not simply to die for our guilt, not simply to die for our filth, but also to die for our shame. He dies for sin and all of the effects of sin. And we have a visible Texas-sized object lesson that here is the mediator dying for sin's guilt and filth and shame. Our Lord must die naked. It is a sign to us. This is the mediator, robbed of his clothes, and hanging upon a tree.

Now we read here, very suggestively, I don't want to make too much over this, not nearly as much as that. We read, "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part." In other words, the soldiers underneath the cross are clothed with the clothes of our Lord.

Now we know what happens in Genesis chapter 3 after God has pronounced judgment upon Adam and Eve for their sin. We read that he slew an animal and he took coats and skins and he clothed them. In other words, he did away with the fig leaves of human righteousness, the human attempt to cloth ourselves with our good works or our religion. And he clothed them with the skins of animals, typical of course of the Lamb of God who would come and through whose righteousness through the merits of whose sacrifice we should be clothed with a clothing acceptable to God. And we read here almost illustrative of this, that the clothes of our Lord are that by which the soldiers are clothed. As one of the finest commentators on the passion has said, "God could put clothing upon the first Adam only because he would one day take it off of the last Adam. Just wait soldiers," this man says, "the Lord himself will presently put new clothes on this last Adam. Just wait until Sunday morning, until Easter morning, nor will any beast have to be killed for that clothing." And of course

he refers to the clothing of glory, which our Lord obtained in his glorified body on the day of the resurrection.

May I then close with just some observations. There are three pictures of sin here. There is the picture of the guilt of sin. In the bandits in the midst of whom the Lord Jesus is crucified, he is there numbered with the transgressors as the one guilty of the broken law for us, of course. There is the picture of the filth of sin in his traversing the way of the stench out to Golgotha where he will be burned by the sin offering, and yet please God by the perfect devotion of his sacrifice. And then there is the picture of the shame of sin in the nakedness. Outward, upward, inward sin has its effects. And the Lord Jesus bore it all.

R. W. Dale was one of the great preachers of his day. And one of his assistants once came to him and said to him, "I wanted to preach on Christ died for our sins. And I thought that if only I could show how through the death of Christ it was made possible for God to forgive sins, many whom I knew might be led to believe." And Dale is reported to have said, "Give up troubling about how it was possible for God to forgive sin, and go straight and tell the people that God does forgive sin and tell them straight that Christ died for sinners. It is the fact that people want most to know, and not your theory nor mine as to how it was or is possible." Now, there is an important truth in that, though of course, not the whole truth. Because it is important to know how God is able to forgive sin. But it is even more important to be sure that we do make the proclamation that God does forgive sin through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a piece of tradition; I don't know how true it is. But there is a piece of tradition that Golgotha, the place where our Lord was crucified had two roads leading to it. One of the roads went into the city of Zion. The other road went into Gehenna. As you know, Gehenna was the place where things were burned. It's typical of hell. And the other, of course, is typical of the city of God. Golgotha is in between, according to the topography of the Holy Spirit, regardless of whether that tradition is true or not. There are two roads that lead from the cross at Calvary. One leads to eternal hellfire if we do not respond. The other leads to communion with the eternal God forevermore.

What is your relationship to the cross? The eternal God working in all the fine details of the ministry of the Lord Jesus has given us a beautiful, full, tremendous picture of the suffering of the Lamb of God, of the death of the sin sacrifice, of the one who overturns and overthrows that which Adam has done, in the provision for the forgiveness of sins.

May God give you grace through the Holy Spirit to recognize your lost condition and inability to come. And may you, on the basis of the promise of God receive the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior. He promises all who come to him, they shall have enablement and forgiveness of sins. May you come to Christ. "Him that cometh unto me," Jesus said, "I will in no wise cast out." Come to Christ. Believe in him. Receive as a free gift eternal life. And come to be rightly related to the Lamb of God who was hanging hundreds of years ago upon the cross as the one through whom sins are forgiven. May God help you to come.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these magnificent words of the Apostle John, written after many years of meditation upon those memorable events in which he himself had a part. And we pray, Lord, that they may impress themselves upon us. May we truly know him as the one through whom sins are forgiven, our sin offering, our Lamb of God, our last Adam. Lord, if there should be some here who have never believed in Christ, O may in the power of the promise of God they come seeking the forgiveness of sins. "For him that cometh to me," Jesus says, "I will in no wise cast out." We pray, O God, for every individual in this auditorium who has not yet come. Give them no rest, nor peace until they do. For those of us who have, Lord...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]