

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson
Romans 8:31-39
"God for Us, or No Separation"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] It's a privilege to turn again to Paul's letter to the Romans and I'd like for you to turn there as we prepare for the exposition of the word of God in a moment by the reading of the word, Romans chapter 8, verse 31 through verse 29. The apostle writes in the 31st verse of the 8th chapter of Romans,

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

That is a magnificent section and we conclude the great first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans with it. May the Lord's blessing rest upon the reading of the word and upon our response to it.

[Prayer removed from audio]

[Message] Our subject for this morning in the exposition of the word of God is, "God for Us or No Separation." God for us, anything added merely detracts from these words. It's the moment for silence and for reverence and worship. Even the commentators of the Epistle to the Romans become remarkably reserved and quiet at this point in their exposition. There is an element here of awed silence like that that falls on a group of people who watch the sun rise from a mountaintop, or for the first time, gazes out over the Atlantic Ocean or the Pacific Ocean at that vast expanse of water, which almost takes away your breath as you think of the illimitable character of it.

Now our generation is not so much surprised by "God for us" as we ought to be, and we are certainly not as surprised at the generation of Paul at this amazing idea of "God for us." We have been so deceived by humanistic types of preaching that we fail to realize that the idea of God being for us would have been a shock for people who understood human nature. We tend to think of God being for us like fire is hot or like water is wet. That's one of those general truths that everyone must believe.

In fact, if someone comes preaching a God who is not for us, we're inclined to say, "What right does that person have to be a god at all?" But for the Apostle Paul, God for us, well that was an amazing thing, because the apostle knew what the Scriptures

teach about human nature. He knows what God says about men, that men are sinners, that men abide under divine condemnation, that men are lost. They know and we should know if we read the Scriptures, that God would have good reason for being against us.

In fact, if we were to know ourselves truly we might wonder how it is possible for God ever to be for me, for such a person as I am, so that God being for us is obviously something that we do not deserve. It would serve us right if God were against us. He would be absolutely just in being against us. So if we read in the Scriptures, God is against us, we would say, "Amen. He would have to be against us for he is a just God and we are lost sinners."

Now God is not the kind of God who fudges on his righteousness and justice. And so, when we read that we are sinners, we may expect God to be against us. He does not in any way lessen his requirements of men because we are sinners. Now it is possible in human affairs for a man who is a guardian of justice to fall and not only to fall, but to diminish the requirements of justice.

Some years ago, there was a public prosecutor in the city of Basel, Switzerland who was caught in the act of stealing a packet of cigarettes from a self-service shop in an unguarded moment. But God does not have any unguarded moments in his justice and in his righteousness. He is always just and always righteous. The eternal keeper of justice does not deviate from the law of God and we have offended him. God for us, that's an amazing fact. It's something that should thrill us every time we read it.

Now the evidence that God is for us is very plain in the word of God. It is the cross of Jesus Christ. That's the sign of love fulfilling justice forever. In the Epistle to the Romans in the first chapter, the apostle has said speaking of human sin and the revelation of divine wrath, he has said, "God gave them over. God gave them over. God gave them over," speaking of the judgment to which men have been given.

Now we find in Romans chapter 8, in this very passage that we have just read, this amazing fact that Jesus Christ has been given over, delivered up for us all. So that the ones to whom, for whom, or of whom it is said "they have been given up" are the ones for whom God has given up his Son. He is for us, for us in the sense that he has been given for us, given for us who are sinners.

Now in the Lord's supper, you'll remember that the Lord Jesus took the bread and he said, "This is my body which is for you." And then he took the cup and he said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins." He is for us in the giving of his body. He is for us in the shedding of his blood. He is for us. I wonder what led Paul to this kind of teaching. Well, he's been dwelling on God's full salvation. He's been saying that God works all things together for good to those who love him to those are the called according to his purpose. And he's expressed this purpose in a five-fold way. He has said we were foreknown. He has said we were foreordained. He has said we were called. He has said we were justified and he has said we were glorified. It is so certain, he puts it in the past tense. The cross is the revelation of the love of God and it is the revelation of the purpose of God towards his saints.

It's also the revelation of the heart of man. There is Caiaphas. Caiaphas is the religious leader of his day. He's the cream of denominational righteousness and it is Caiaphas who hears our Lord Jesus Christ answer his own question, "Art Thou the Messiah?" with "I AM" who turns and rends his garments accusing the Lord Jesus Christ,

the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, of blasphemy for making the statement that he is the Messianic King, the Son of God.

There is Pilate, the cream of Roman elite commanders and Pilate, too, wavering, constantly wavering, never willing to follow what his mind tells him is true that Jesus Christ is guiltless and, finally, giving him over in order to gain the favor of men.

Caiaphas, Pilate, the elders of the Jewish nation, the Gentiles, the soldiers, even Peter, even Peter, *primus inter pares*, first among equals among the apostles, stands by the fire with a little girl by his side and says, "I do not even know him." What a revelation the cross of Jesus Christ is of the human heart. And if you think he's speaking of the person next to you, you are mistaken. He is speaking of you. You couldn't stand up with a Caiaphas. You couldn't stand up with a Pilate. You could not stand by the side of the soldiers or Peter, but nevertheless, in spite of these things, "he is for us," the Scriptures say, for me.

Well, I know that we've been talking about God's full salvation. We've moved from election, predestination onto glorification. Someone says, "That's Calvinistic doctrine." Well, yes, that's precisely what it is, but it's biblical doctrine. That's the important thing. We don't follow this because Calvin taught it. Calvin taught it because it was in the Bible. We follow the Bible. We turn around and there's Calvin walking with us. There was an elderly woman once who didn't know a great deal about theology. She heard somebody talk about high Calvinistic doctrine and she said, "Well, she believed in high Calvarist doctrine, too." [Laughter] And that's the kind of doctrine we believe in, high Calvarist doctrine. That is, the cross of Jesus Christ where he suffered on Calvary is the heart of our faith.

Now the apostle, I say, has been expounding these great truths, God's for us. He governs all of the steps of our way. He works everything together for good to those who are the called according to his purpose. He set forth the purpose in that great five-fold way and now he asks the question in verse 31, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" When he says, "What shall we then say to these things?" he means these things he's just been talking about, that divine continuing providence, that divine election, that divine foreordination. One looking at the intimate choice, one looking at the gold. He's talking about the divine calling that reached down and selected us and brought us to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Some of us out of the insurance business, some out of another business, some while we're in school, some as we sat around the table and heard our fathers and mothers expound the word of God. He called us and justified us. And he is so certain to glorify us that he puts it in the past tense, "What shall we then say to these things?" All of them speak with the loudest kind of message to the effect that God is for us.

Now we have adversaries. The Bible says we have adversaries. Paul says we have adversaries. In fact, he says we have adversaries right in this passage. Listen to him, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation (that's an adversary), shall distress (that's an adversary), shall persecution (that's an adversary), shall famine (that's an adversary), nakedness, peril, sword?" And then if that's not enough he speaks in verse 28 of death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, any other creation, these are our adversaries, but in the midst of all of our adversaries, Jesus Christ is for us by virtue of his sacrifice. And I want to say to you that when he says, "If God be for us," there's no doubt about it. In fact,

even in the original text, this is a first class condition. This is the basis upon which he's supposing this result. We could render it "since God is for us." What he means is, in the light of this, it's clear God's for us. Now if he's for us, who can be against us?

There's no doubt at all and I would say, incidentally, that if you grasp this thought and grasp it well and make it one of the planks of your existence, you won't have to call on the psychologists. You won't have to call on the psychiatrists, because the man whose grasped this will have what they like to speak of as an integrated personality. It's integrated into the program of God for us, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" We have the adversaries, but they'll not prevail against us. The Apostle Peter heard the Lord Jesus say, "Peter, blessed art thou. Flesh and blood has not revealed this great truth to thee. On this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her." So we have adversaries, but they will not prevail against us.

Now I come to one of the climactic texts in Romans to me, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Magnificent statement, "He that spared not his own Son." I know what Paul was thinking about. I know you say, "Well, Dr. Johnson, you told us it was going to snow in Colorado," [laughter] and it did, "but, can you tell us really that Paul is thinking about something specifically here?" Yes, I think I can. You see, he uses a word that is used a couple of times in the Old Testament and a great passage in Genesis chapter 22.

In that chapter, we have the sacrifice by Abraham of Isaac. And you'll remember those two individuals, the father and the son, after the father had received the word that he was to offer up the son, they traveled for three days. They went to mount Moriah and there the company that had gone with them were told to stop at the bottom of the hill. And Abraham said, "I and the lad will go up and we are going to worship there and we will come again." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "Ah, that proves that he in typical fashion understood there would be a resolution." So they travel up that hill together, the father and the son, just like the Lord Jesus Christ traveled with the Father to the hill of Calvary, and as they reach the place at the top of the hill, the altar was prepared. Isaac was a young man then not a babe. He was young man. He stood around in obedience, magnificent faith on Isaac's part.

Finally, he was bound, he was placed on the altar, and Abraham took the knife out of his hand to slay his son and the angel of the Lord called out and said, "Abraham, Abraham," and he said, "Here am I." He said, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing more unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not spared (that word is the very same word in the Greek text of the Old Testament that the apostle uses at Romans 8:32, "thou hast not spared) thy son, thine only son from me." In a moment he says, "By myself I have sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing and hast not spared thy son, thine only son."

Paul was thinking about that incident when he said, "He that spared not his only Son, but delivered him up for us all." For when the Lord Jesus Christ and the Father went to Calvary and the Father drew back his hand in order to smite the Son for the sins of sinners, there was no one in heaven above him who would say, "O Father, O Father, do not lay Thy hand upon the Son." For the sacrifice must take place, the sword must be plunged into the heart of the Son of God as he cries out, "O my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and ultimately, "It is finished." He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

Now I want you to notice this statement a little more carefully, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" You know, I have a thing about 20th Century people who read the Bible. They don't think. They don't meditate. They read the words. They think they've read the Bible. God expects us to meditate upon the word of God and come to its meaning, "How shall he now with him also freely give us all things?" Now would there be anyone who would question that the greatest thing that God could do for anyone is to give the second person of the Trinity as a sacrifice for sinners? Can there possibly be any greater thing than that? There can be no greater thing than that. That's the greatest thing that God can do for men. Everything else is subordinate. Everything else is less.

Now we know that in order to come to faith in Jesus Christ, to become a member of the family of God, we need that there should be a sacrifice for sin. We need for the Son of God to propitiate the Father. We need for justice to be satisfied. We have a need for righteousness and its requirements to be met and Jesus Christ has accomplished that by his death on the cross. But, in order for us to be saved, we also need something else. We need the work of the Holy Spirit in applying the redemption. We need the work of the Holy Spirit in efficacious grace. We need of course the gift of new life and faith. All of these things are things that are necessary for our salvation. The death of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the gift of repentance, and faith, and life, and justification, but all of these things are lesser things from the great thing, the gift of the Son of God.

Now, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" If, my dear Christian friend, "if he has given the most," Paul says, "will he not give the least?" If he has given the best thing possible, the gift of the Son of God, shall he not give the rest of the things? In other words, if God has given Jesus Christ to die for us then anything else that he gives is less and he must give it by virtue of the fact that he's given the most, that's what Paul says, "He that spared not his own Son for us, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Now, I say to you, if it is true (there's a catch here), if it is true that Jesus Christ has died for us, all human beings, then every human being must be saved: for everything else is less, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" But, the Scriptures make it plain, not all are saved. Many are lost. Many are lost now and lost forever. It is therefore clear that when we read, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," he means us all who are believers. Sometimes I have friends say to me, "Where do you get particular redemption in the Bible?" My friend, it's on every page of the Bible practically. Throughout the Bible it speaks of what God does for his people, for his own, and occasionally for his elect. Here is a text that is plain as day, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

If that all is everyone, then the apostle is wrong or else everybody is saved, but we know it's different. He gave himself for all of us who are believers and because he gave himself for us all, he's given everything else. He's given the efficacious work of the Holy Spirit. He brought us to faith. He brought us to faith, many of us when we were Arminians [laughter]; overlooked that. Brought us to faith, gave us life, gave us justification of life, and then gradually through the years he's doing his great work of

sanctification accomplishing that just as surely and he'll bring us finally to the place where we are like his own Son. Everybody then will believe in high Calvinist doctrine. There's no way, there's no possible way in which the apostle can mean anything other than that God had a special love for his people, "Jacob has he loved. Esau has he hated," these are the words of God. My dear Christian friend, if you want to have the joy of the Lord, read and study the Scriptures and rest upon them and rejoice in them. All right, that's enough of that.

Now the apostle at this point asks some specific questions. One of them is a justification question. He says in verse 33, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's (Oh, there it is [Laughter], there it is [Laughter]. That's evidence you see what he means by us all, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's, there it is, God's) people, God's elect. See if you have some problems, you don't have them with me. [Laughter] You're just repeating what Paul says giving a little bit of exposition, of course, of what the apostle says, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

Notice, "Shall God that justifieth?" Why we have stood before the great throne of heaven and we have pled that our hope is in the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross, and the Father in heaven, in his act as our great judge, has said not only acquitted, but acquitted of crimes and established in righteousness. And then someone says, "But wait a minute, I object!" You see, with to whom you are objecting? You're objecting to the one who has justified. The one who has said, "He is righteous by virtue of trust in Jesus Christ."

Now the objector is an objector against the throne of God. It is God that justifieth. You cannot attack the Judge. And then there follows a question that might be called the sanctification question. The full answer, of course, to that question is involved the exposition of Romans chapter 3, verse 1 through verse 26, or really from Romans 1:1 through chapter 5, verse 11. But now the second question is asked in verse 34, "Who is he that condemneth?" and the apostle answers his question with some other questions. "Shall Christ that died yea rather that is risen again who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us?"

Now Paul is not bold to say that he is justified and he's not bold to throw out these challenges because he has discounted sin in any way. There is no one who understood sin any more than the Apostle Paul except our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the person who wrote the great 7th chapter of Romans in which he plums the depths of a believer's heart and finds in it indwelling sin. He's the one who said that we have sinned and Adam and we are condemned. He is the one who said, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." He's not said all of these wonderful things that God is for us because he's discounted sin. No, no, he's not discounted sin.

He's a person who knows precisely what sin is and he doesn't say these things because of what Paul has done. He says these things because of what his substitute, Jesus Christ, has done. His trust is in his representative. His trust is in his substitute, and Christ is a four-fold protection. Number one, he has died. Number two, he has been raised from the dead. That is evidence our debts have been paid for, the Father has accepted the sacrifice. Number three, he is at the right hand of the throne of God and if we are to be condemned, we must condemn the head of the body of Christ who is seated at the right hand of the majesty of this universe.

And, finally, he ever lives to make intercession for us. He's the Priest who offered the sacrifice, and the sacrifice was offered with a specific purpose, and now he lives at the right hand of the throne of God to pray that everyone for whom that sacrifice has been made shall reach heaven. He ever lives to make intercession for those for whom he offered the sacrifice. The priests of Israel made sacrifice for Israelites and they ministered as high priest for Israelites, for the people of God. Our Great High Priest ministers as the great high priest for the people of God.

You know, I sometimes think that Paul's like a little boy. He's been going walking along the street and here comes a great big dog running out after him. All little boys have had that experience. First thing you do is look around for rocks or a stick or something, but the dog comes menacingly close and, finally, you break into a run and you manage to make it home and shut the door and there is the dog outside. And so, what do you do? You get a stick and you start poking it as long as you're not in danger. And so, you tease the dog, do everything you can to make the dog even madder. That's almost what Paul is doing here, he's saying, "Whose going to condemn us? Shall Christ that died? Shall Christ that rose again? Shall Christ who sits at the right hand of the throne of God? Shall this individual who ever lives to make intercession for us?" No, no.

Now he asks the final one that has to do with glorification, verse 35, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, shall distress, shall persecution, or famine, nakedness, peril, sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." The apostle reaches back into the Old Testament, reminds his listeners that believers are like sheep. They are persecuted. They do experience trials. They do go through difficult times. And, furthermore, the whole of the world is against them, too, ultimately they are. Jesus said, "If the world hated me, it will hate you." The servant is not above his master. The world ultimately will show its fangs. It hates us because its god is opposed to our God. They are nice at times, but finally when the facts are faced, they turn against the truth of God and are enemies of the word of God.

So the apostle says, "We're gonna have all of the things. We are sheep that are accounted for the slaughter, but the magnificent thing about the sheep of God is that they are stronger than the gorillas, and the lions, and the wild bulls of the Pampas, and all of the other animals, because the Lion of the tribe of Judah fights for them. The word of God makes that plain in the final analysis when the beast is arrayed against the Lamb in the last days of the present age. It's the Lamb who wins not the wild beast. It's the Lamb who overcomes the beast because the Lamb is the word of God. So Paul says, "In all these things," in all these things not out of them, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Experience is no proof of the love or lack of love of God for us. One looks at the cross of Jesus Christ and he might well have said as so many of us frequently attempted to say, "God must not love me because I'm the only good person who's ever lived and I've done nothing but bless men, but now God in heaven has allowed me to experience this." We frequently turn to our experiences and wonder if God loves us. No, no. It's not experience, it's what does the Scriptures say? That's the important thing. Experience is never a proof of the love of God; it's the word of God. So he says, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." More than conquerors not simply conquerors. Paul uses an expression, he doesn't use anywhere else. It's a Hollywood

kind of expression, sorry to admit. It's super victory, colossal, grandiose victory. We are more than conquerors. We're not only overcome, but the very things that are opposed to us are the means by which we do overcome. Conquering sheep, that's what we are, conquering sheep, because of our Great Shepherd the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now notice, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him," arousing victory by means of the cross. Here we are sheep for slaughter, but we are victors. What a contrast. Why? Well, because the Bible makes it plain that stand still and see what God will do, "Be still, and know that I am God." Sit still and we will see what the man will do, it was say of Boaz and Ruth. So it is through the Lord Jesus and what he has done that we conquer.

The apostle concludes with some words concerning his grand persuasion. We are mighty thin on persuasion these days. People get up and say now some people say this, and others say this and "I think" or "I reckon" or "I hope this may be true." The apostle says, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation." When man was asked once, "What's your persuasion?" He said, "What do you mean?" I mean, "What's your persuasion?" He was asking what his denomination was, whether he was a Baptist or a Presbyterian, or any of those inconsequential things. He said, "Well, my persuasion is, I'm persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor power shall ever be able to separate me from the love of God. That's my persuasion." Dr. Ironside, when he used to be asked about what denomination he was a member of he would say, "I'm a member of David's denomination." Puzzlement would come over the faces of his questioner, "David's denomination? What's that?" He said, "I'm a companion of all them that fear the Lord." That's a good denomination to belong to. I hope you belong to it.

Now he says, "Look, not anything will separate us from the love of God" and, finally, giving out of words, he says, "any other creation" everything else is a creation, but God the creator is on our side. Death shall not overcome us. Death shall not separate us from the love of God. If you want a testimony to that listen to Lazarus. Lazarus knew what death was. He knew it didn't separate him from the love of God. The thief on the cross, he knew that death did not separate him from the love of God. Every believer who has ever died knows that death does not separate us from the love of God. Death actually belongs to us, Paul says, in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, and he says it is essentially the means by which we get by which we enter the presence of God. That belongs to us. It's one of our properties, death. Someone said, "Well, God will be faithful, but we can be unfaithful" and the Bible even covers little things like that. It says, "If we believe not, he abides faithful." You see it is impossible for us, if we have come to a trust in Jesus Christ, to escape the love of God. We cannot separate ourselves. Even that faith is something God has given us.

Guy King in one of his little books tells about a little girl. She must have been just about the size of this little girl sitting on the front row down here. And this little girl was in England and she was at a street corner and she wanted to cross over the street. And she was standing there, and she was trembling a little bit, and the Bobby took a look over and happened to see the fear on her face, and just walked over and reached down and took her hand in his hand, and they began to make their way across the street. The

Lorries were coming and when one of them would come, she would flinch and draw back, but he would hold onto her hand and they got across in safety.

And Guy King made the point, it's not our grasp of the Lord that matters, it's his grasp of us. He had a little stanza he cited, "Let me no more my comfort draw from my frail grasp of Thee. Let me henceforth rejoice with awe in Thy strong grasp of me." That's what we Christians are. We've been given to understand ourselves. We've been given faith. We've been given justification. We've been given great hopes and we have been given the assurance of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ with us to the end. It is something we have been given and he will sustain us and take us safely through. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

We began this chapter, "There is therefore now no condemnation," we conclude with no separation. The love of God will always sustain us. We have need to fear nothing that lies before us. I think it's rather strange that the apostle locates our confidence in the love of God rather than in the strength of God. When we think of the anxiety that we have as we face the problems of life, we're inclined to want to talk in human terms, we want to talk about strength. So when we say anxiety comes, I was able to meet it because I found myself strong. But in the Bible, opposed to anxiety, is love and the love of God. The reason, of course, is simply this, that it is the assurance of a loving God with all of his capacities that enables us to face anxiety. Courage is anxiety suppressed. Confidence in the love of God is anxiety gone. Gone, no longer there. We have a God who has loved us and proved it in the death of the Son. Everything else is less and having given the most, he'll give the rest.

George Matheson was one of the great hymn writers and he was a preacher. He fell in love with a young lady and they planned to get married, but one day the time came when she gave him up, and she told Mr. Matheson that she no longer was going to go through with their engagement and he was crushed. He went home. Thought about it a great deal. Finally, picked up his pen and wrote that great hymn that we sometimes sing, "Oh love that will not let me go." No other love can match the love of our Heavenly Father in Christ.

Now he says "separate us" and, of course, he means separate us from him. We're eternally his. The Bible says, "We have eternal life." What does that mean? Well, you know, my father used to grow camellias and he was not a great expert, but he had fifty-three camellia plants in his yard in Charleston, South Carolina. And every now and then he would take a little scion and he would graft it into a stock. And, of course, he would watch it very carefully and watch it grow and took a great deal of pleasure in those things in his latter years.

You know, you can learn something from that because when the storms came in the wintertime, that little scion which had been implanted in that strong stock, partook of all of the strength of the plant so that the life of the stock became the life of the scion. You know, you see a man who is born into a family. This morning at the breakfast table we were speaking about this and one man spoke about the fact that one of his ancestors was a man by the name of Hanson, who was the president of the first Continental Congress, I believe and in effect, the first president. And he was taking a great deal of delight in that and justly so. He belongs to that line so he has the nobility of it, all of the things in which he could rejoice. That's his ancestor. In fact, I was feeling pretty good I was sitting at the breakfast table with him [Laughter] and that he attends Believers

Chapel. [Laughter] So he has a great heredity, a great inheritance, and he also has life and great hope because of his life in Christ.

But you know, we have been taken out of Adam like a little scion and we have been grafted into the last Adam, and when we're grafted into the last Adam, we become a member of the family of God. We can say, "Wait a minute, our ancestors go back beyond Adam. They go back beyond Adam to the one who created Adam. We have the life of God. We have a glorious past and a glorious future because we have what the Bible calls eternal life." That's what we've been given, eternal life, and because we have it, we're safe forever. The objects of the love of a great God who had us in his mind when the Son was offered on the cross at Calvary.

Well, we began by saying God is for us. Paul means believers. He means his elect as the passage is plainly taught. May I phrase the question I put to you in his words? What shall we then say to these things? What shall you sitting in my audience, what shall you say to these things? Well, now there are many answers we might give. They classify us. There are some no doubt sitting in the audience who would say, "I don't understand what Dr. Johnson is talking about. He's over my head." Well, you know, some preachers get upset at that. When they hear somebody say, "He was over my head." Well, I think there are times when, I know there are times when I can be over a Christian's and over a mature Christian's head. In fact, I'm in deep water myself [Laughter] on those occasions. But when someone says, "He's over my head" that may be very revealing, because there are some responses to the Bible that go like this, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned." And it may be that sitting in the audience you're saying, "I do not understand what Dr. Johnson's talking about."

Well, it may be that the Bible has put its finger upon your condition. You're lost. You do not have this life of which the Scriptures speak. Or perhaps there [are] some in the audience saying, "Well, I think I understand what he's talking about, but I don't really want to change things yet. When I have a convenient season." You put that in quotes because that's what Felix said. When Paul reasoned of judgment to come, Felix said, "When I have a convenient season, Paul, I'll talk to you again about it." And he brought Paul in a number of times hoping that Paul would give him a little gift and then he would free him.

And then there was Peter, poor weak Peter, *primus inter pares*, but weak, weak as water, Simon, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am? "Some say Jeremiah, some say Elijah, some say one of the prophets." But, the Lord said, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter spoke up, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto you on this rock of 'Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God,' I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Who? We rest in him and what he's done.

If you are here this morning and you have never believed in Jesus Christ, we invite you to come to the Son of God, the salvation has been provided for sinners, all sinners are welcome. Come, sinners, receive the wonderful grace of eternal life. May God give you the strength to come. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these wonderful words, which so magnificently set forth the greatness of the triune God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we worship Thee, the Father who loved us, the Son who died for us, the Spirit who has regenerated and quickened us...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]