



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Matthew 9:18–26

Gospel of Matthew

“Master of Death and Man of Feeling”

TRANSCRIPT

The Scripture reading for this morning is in Matthew chapter 9 verse 18 through verse 26, in which we have an account of the healing of the ruler of the synagogue’s daughter, as well as the healing of the woman with the issue of blood. Now this incident is recorded in all three of our Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke, and unfortunately for us in the exposition for us in the Gospel of Matthew, the other two accounts of this incident are much longer than this account—and much more detailed, I should add—than it is in Matthew.

I’m going to read the account in Matthew, but in the exposition that follows, I will try to deal with some of the other aspects of the events that are recorded for us in the others gospels, particularly the Gospel of Luke, so that will account for the fact that in my exposition, you may discover that we are turning over the Gospel of Luke and considering in some detail some of the questions and points that are given there concerning this incident.

But let’s turn now to Matthew chapter 9 verse 18 through verse 26 for our Scripture reading.

“While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshiped him, saying, ‘My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.’ And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an

issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, ‘If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.’ But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, ‘Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.’ And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, he said unto them, ‘Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.’ And they laughed him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all the land.

May God’s blessing rest upon the reading of his inspired Word.

The subject for today is “Master of Death and Man of Feeling.” I’m sure that you recognize from the title that it has to do with the two natures of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the resultant thoughts that arise of that great fact. Vital to the Christian faith is the doctrine of the two natures of Christ. He is the man who stands for us, and he is the God who saves. He is more than a prophet, even a prophet of God as the Socinians would have had him. He is more than a superman or God’s plenipotentiary as the Arians in the 5th Century would have had him to be. He is the supernal man, the Lord from heaven, and Athanasius and the others who fought for the full deity of our Lord Jesus Christ were fighting for what is essential to Christianity, when they affirmed that he was truly God and truly man.

The church came to a decision concerning the nature of Jesus Christ in 451 A.D. at the Council of Chalcedon. And the canons of that Council are of tremendous importance for us. When the Council affirmed the facts concerning the nature of the Son of God, they were affirming things that we today in the Christian faith still believe and still acknowledge to be extremely important. If I

may, I want to read that statement from the Council, because it is of great importance. Therefore, following the holy fathers, we read,

“We all, with one accord, teach men to acknowledge one in the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead, and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body, of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects apart from sin. As regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages; but as regards his manhood, begotten for us men and for our salvation of Mary the virgin, the God-bearer. One in the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, recognized in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; this distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union; rather, the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and only begotten of God the word, Lord Jesus Christ, even as the prophets of old spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.”

That statement is of the greatest importance for understanding who Jesus Christ is.

The events that we have read about in Matthew chapter 9 pointedly placard him as the Master of Death. And it's not surprising that after the healing of Jairus' daughter, the bystanders should be left in astonishment, as Luke puts it, for it was a manifestation of the deity of the Lord Jesus.

I remember that when John the Apostle had his contact with the Lord Jesus on the Isle of Patmos, he fell at the feet of our Lord as dead, and the Lord Jesus, in vision, laid his right hand upon

him, saying to him, “Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forever more, amen, and have the keys of Hades and death.” What we see in this incident we see as the fulfillment of the statement our Lord has made. He is the one who has the keys to Hades and death.

Not only is our Lord’s deity stressed in this incident; his humanity is also stressed, and it broadcasts him as a man of feeling. Not only very God of very God, but truly and perfectly man apart from sin. As the German scholar Hoete[?] said, “He is to me the unimpeachable holy of holies of humanity.”

Now as we look at this incident, I hope that these two things come before us with a great deal of force and appeal. The Lord Jesus was being welcomed back in Galilee again, and as a result of that, as he was speaking of some of the things that the preceding context set forth for us, a man came forward, evidently very much disturbed, and fell down before him and earnestly and urgently exhorted the Lord Jesus to come and to heal his sick daughter.

There are three figures in this story, and the first is that ruler of the synagogue. Matthew does not even tell us his name, but Mark and Luke do tell us that his name was Jairus. Jairus was a man of responsibility and position. The ruler of the synagogue was not a man who preached, but he was a man who arranged the matters that had to do with the conduct of life in the synagogue. He did not himself preach the Word, but he was the one who made arrangements for others to preach the Word. He saw that the services that were conducted in the synagogue were conducted in good order. And he, I would imagine, would correspond to the elders of our local churches in the present era.

In fact, many of the things that transpired in the synagogue were taken over into the Christian church. One of the things that was possible in the synagogue and its ministry was for anyone who had a gift of the ministry of the Word of God to stand up in the congregation and exhort them. When the Apostle Paul came to Antioch, they spoke to him and said to him and to those who were with him, “If you brethren have any word of exhortation, say on,” and they were invited, known, evidently, as expositors of the Word of God.

Freedom to preach the Word in the assembly was a characteristic of the New Testament church. That is why on Sunday evening, in the Believers Chapel, in the meeting of the church in which we observe the Lord’s Supper, there is freedom for the manifestation of the spiritual gifts of utterance. Now by that, of course, we do not mean that we speak in tongues; we do not feel that that is an applicable gift for today, but ministry of the Word is.

This man, this ruler of the synagogue, then, was evidently a man of responsibility and position. But his sick daughter was a tremendous worry and disturbance to him. He evidently had, as anyone else would have done, had committed her to doctors, but they were unable to help. His wife was unable to help. He himself was unable to help. And having heard of the Lord Jesus, and thinking perhaps that the Lord Jesus was the last resort, he had come to him.

Now, it would have taken a great deal of abandonment of his pride to come to the Lord Jesus, being ruler of the synagogue. But he did come, and he fell down before Jesus, and requested the Lord Jesus that he would come and heal his daughter. Temple Thurston wrote a little work called *The City of Beautiful Nonsense*, and in the course of it, he said a very illuminating thing. He said that “We are inclined in the early days of our life, in the days of health and prosperity, to treat life as though it were a circus. Each one of us imagines that we are a master of ceremonies in the ring. And we come out in broadcloth, in buckskin britches, in silk hat and crack the whip. Everything seems to go to our order until one day a lion breaks out of his cage. And then,” said Temple Thurston, “life gets up and looks at us.”

There are experiences that we all have, and I’m sure that sooner or later for every one of us—and that means for every one of you in this auditorium—life is going to get up and look at you. If it has not done so already, it surely will. Everything will not be peaches and cream and prosperity and happiness, but sooner or later, you, too, will be faced with one of these challenges in which, as Temple Thurston says, life gets up and looks at us.

This little girl, incidentally, was an only child one of the other gospel writers tell us, and so that stresses the urgency and the poignancy of this request. Twelve years, he had enjoyed the blessing

of that little life in his home. As she pattered about the house, and prattled on with her little talk, and her life had been a blessing to all of them who were known to her, he had, of course, come to have the strongest of relationships to her. It doesn't take but a few months to become attached to a child, and twelve years is an awful lot of attachment.

The ruler of the synagogue came and said, “My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay your hand upon her, and she shall live.” Now, incidentally, the other accounts differ slightly, and the reason for that is that Matthew telescopes the account and gives us the essential facts. You can read the details in the other.

Now, there's something I want you to notice in the third character here, the Lord Jesus, which I think is rather striking. A certain ruler came to him, Matthew says, and worshiped him. Now, you would think that if the Lord Jesus were only a man, he would say something about that. But he does not. In the 19th chapter, in the book of Revelation, the Apostle John has been given a vision, a mighty vision—one of the many visions that he is given in the book of Revelation—by one of the angels. And when the vision is over, in the 10th verse of the 19th chapter of the book of Revelation we read, “And I fell at his feet and worshiped him, and he, the angel, said unto me, ‘See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’”

Now I want you to notice what happened. When the angel finished giving John the vision, he fell at his feet in order to worship him. And in that worshiping position, the angel said to him, don't do it; I am also a fellow servant of God. Worship God. In other words, men know that men should not be worshiped, and angels know that men should not be worshiped, but the Lord Jesus receives the worship of men and does not say a thing about it, accepting it as a thing that is truthful and valid for him. It is, in itself, a tremendous claim to deity, and we shall see as we go through the Gospel of Matthew that this again transpires. Men come to worship him; he does not rebuke them, for worship belongs to God and he is God.

So, the Lord Jesus accepts the worship. And now, on the way to Jairus' house, something else happens. We read in the 20th verse of the 9th chapter, “And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment.” Along the way, he heals the woman with the issue of blood.

This woman, also, for twelve years, had been disturbed by menorrhagia. It was a terrible kind of sickness, and furthermore, it made her unclean according to Jewish law. For twelve years she had had the experience of uncleanness. She had attempted to find healing from the doctors and had been unable to do so. As a result of it, she had this tremendous desire to be healed. Evidently, just as in the case Jairus, word concerning the Lord Jesus had come. And she thought, if I may but just touch the hem of his garment, I may be healed.

Incidentally, in the description of the ailment of this woman, there is an interesting comment by Mark who writes the second of our Gospels. Now, remember that Luke is a doctor, and in describing the difficulty of this woman, Luke gives us a very detailed insight into her difficulty. He writes, “And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, who had spend her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any.” Now notice that. Luke is honest enough to tell us that this woman has spent everything that she had upon doctors, and she couldn't be healed.

But now, he didn't really tell the whole story. I've often thought that these apostles write so plainly and so true-to-fact that it's an evidence of the inspiration of the Word of God. And also, they were human beings. He didn't really tell the whole story, and Mark does. Now, I don't know if Mark was a little angry with the P.M.A.—now, the P.M.A. is, in case you didn't know what that stands for, is the Palestinian Medical Association [laughter]—and he had undoubtedly had some feelings with regard to them, because he wrote, just as truly concerning this woman, she had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and then adds that which Luke leaves out, “And was no better, but rather grew worse.” Now, I know that has never happened to you, but nevertheless, it is an insight into the humanity of the writers of Scripture.

Well, this woman came, and thinking if she could just touch the hem of the garment of the Lord Jesus she might be healed, she came up behind him, concealing the fact from him, reached out and grabbed one of the tassels of his cloak. Now, the Jews wore certain garments, and the Lord Jesus evidently wore one of them. And so she reached and caught one of them, and as she caught it, she was healed.

The Lord Jesus immediately stopped, so the other accounts tells us, he turned around and said, “Who touched me?” The apostles, quick to answer, said, why, Lord, there’s a tremendous crowd here. They’re all pressing upon you and against you; what do you mean, who touched you? He said, “Someone has touched me, for I perceive that virtue has gone out of me.” And recognizing that the Lord knew exactly who had touched him, she came forward—the woman—and confessed to him that she was the one who had touched him. And he said to her, “Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee well.” And the woman was made whole from that hour.

I would imagine that Jairus, who was along with the Lord Jesus at this time, may have wanted to hurry him on from this incident, because, after all, at this point, in the account, from the other two accounts, he had not yet learned that his daughter was dead, only that she was dying. Well, the delays of the Lord Jesus may pain us, but they are not denials of what he is going to do for us. And in this case, as Mr. Scroggy has pointed out, this delay may have pained Jairus. But his delays are not denials, although we may be disciplined.

And in this case, it was a test of the faith of Jairus, who had come to the Lord Jesus for his daughter, and he was disciplined by the Lord’s delay in this case. But nevertheless, as a result of the incident, his faith may well have been encouraged and increased, because now he saw in the remarkable healing of the woman with the issue of blood that he was truly the Savior of men who could heal.

Incidentally, I think it is very striking that in this account, the Lord Jesus deals with the individuals that are about him. There is a great mass of people about him, but the Lord is interested in the one. I read this past week, after I completed the *Believer’s Bible Bulletin*, a story about the sinking

of the Titanic. Many stories have been told about events in connection with the sinking of the Titanic; this one I had missed.

It seems that when the news of the Titanic came to the United States, one of our great newspapers, *The American*, had a lengthy article on the sinking, naturally, and devoted almost the entire article to the effects of the sinking upon one man. Almost all of their account was devoted to the fact that among those who had drowned was John Jacob Astor, one of the most famous of the American multi-millionaires. The passing of 1800 people into eternity was passed by in the article with just a word or so.

How different it is in spiritual things. The Lord Jesus is interested in the individual, and you can see it in both of these accounts. A little twelve-year-old girl is of concern to him, and a woman who had been sick for twelve years is of concern to him.

Well, after this has taken place, the Lord makes his way to the house of Jairus. There came word, now, that the daughter is not at the point of death, but has actually died. And so now turning to the 8th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, I want to spend the remaining part of our time with the response of our Lord Jesus as it is highlighted in three words that he speaks in that 8th chapter. The first of them is in the 8th chapter and 50th verse, “While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue’s house, saying to him, “Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.”” Will you notice that when this news came to Jairus in the presence of the Lord Jesus that his daughter has now died, immediately—before Jairus can even say anything—the Lord Jesus encourages Jairus by saying to him, “Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.”

So, we see in this incident, too, the sensitiveness of the Lord Jesus. He actually appeals to Jairus to help Jairus, encourage him, even before Jairus speaks a word—encouraging him to believe only, and she shall be made well.

Last week, I read a little article that had to do with faith, written by a popular Bible teacher. And in the course of it, he suggested that you could define faith by this simple little acrostic. Faith is

spelled, F-A-I-T-H, and we might define faith as For All I Take Him, or, For All I Thank Him, or, For All I Trust Him. Faith. Believe, only, Jairus, and your daughter shall be made well.

Well, having said that, they came to the house. And when they came to the house, some interesting things transpire. And the second of our Lord’s statements is made in verse 52. “And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, ‘Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.’ And they laughed him to scorn.”

Now, I want you to notice some things about our Lord’s actions here which stress his true humanity. And the first thing that you want to notice, or at least I want you to notice, is the indignation of the Lord Jesus. When he was come to the house, he allowed no man to go in. Matthew tells us, “He said unto them, ‘Give place,’” or as the New International Version renders it, “Go away!”

Now, when he arrived there, the traditional things that accompanied the death and mourning of a departed one were taking place. Now to understand all of this, I think it’s necessary for us to understand the customs of people in the East when someone dies. The Jews set very high the obligation of mourning over the dead. “Whoever is remiss in mourning over the death of a wise man deserves to be burned alive,” so they said. And there were three mourning customs that are referred to right in this incident, incidentally.

There was the rending of garments. So, when a person died in a home, and the family were gathered about, there were actually no fewer than 39 rules and regulations that were to be carried out in connection with the rending of garments and other practices. For example, the rent was to be made while the person was standing. The clothes were to be rent to heart, so that the sin was exposed. For a father or mother, the rent was exactly over the heart; for others, it was on the right side. The rent must be big enough for a fist to be inserted into it. For seven days, the rent must be left gaping open. For the next thirty days, it must be loosely stitched so it could be seen. Only then

could it be repaired, and so on. This was one of the customs—and I’m sure you can picture what was transpiring in this home as the Lord Jesus arrived.

But not only that, there was wailing for the dead. The wailing for the dead was a professional kind of thing. In a house of grief, this incessant wailing was kept up, and it was done by professional wailing women, who were hired to wail. I don’t know what the price for wailing was, but I would imagine that it was fairly high. It seems to me that followers of the Cowboys at particular times might be especially qualified for such activity [laughter], but nevertheless, they wailed.

And, they were remarkable people because, since they were professional wailers, they knew all about the history of every person in the community, so that they were able to wail in such a way so as to cause others who were there to join them in their wailing. And, when someone came to their house, they knew enough about that individual and enough about the history of them to make reference in their wailing to something that happened to them, so that they would join in. And so the noise that is referred to in Scripture when the Lord Jesus came and heard all the noise, it was the noise of the wailing women and others who were joining in with them to wail over the fact that tragedy had come to the home.

And the third thing that accompanied this wailing was the playing of the flute. The music of the flute was especially associated with death. The Talmud lays it down. The husband is bound to bury his dead wife and to make loud lamentations and mourning for her. And also, the very poorest among the Israelites will not allow him less than two flutes and one wailing woman, so that it was required by law that if a wife died, no matter how poor a person was, that there should be two flute players there and one wailing woman. But if he’s rich, the rules go, let all things be done according to his qualities.

Incidentally, this was not only a Jewish custom but it was a Roman custom as well. And the flute-playing caused so much trouble for others who were nearby; it was so emotional and so exciting, that the Romans passed a law by which they limited the number of flute players at any funeral to ten.

So, when the Lord Jesus arrived, then, there was the rending of garments to those who were involved. There was the wailing of the women. And there was the flute-playing going on at the same time. Now when he arrived, it states in Holy Scripture that when he heard the noise, he told them to get away, and the Scripture puts it very bluntly in the original text: he ejected them. So, he drove them out of the house. And you can see in this a rebuking on the part of the Lord Jesus of all of the empire of disorder that is related, ultimately to Satan.

Remember just a few weeks ago when we were studying the calming of the storm on the sea. And in the midst of the storm the disciples awakened the Lord Jesus, and the text of Scripture says that he arose and rebuked the wind and waves. Did you notice that word, rebuke? I didn't say anything about it in the message, because usually I have so much to say, I cannot get it all in. And that's one thing I didn't say anything about because it raises a lot of other questions.

Why did he rebuke the wind and the waves? Why, the reason that he rebuked them, evidently, is that he regarded this as an attack upon himself from the kingdom of Satan himself. And so as a result of that, he stood up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and evidencing the fact that lying back of this attempt on his own life in that boat was Satan and his whole kingdom.

When he arrived at the grave of Lazarus, the text of Scripture says that he was indignant over it, and troubled himself. Why? Because he saw in Lazarus the effects of sin and death. And then, in a moment of course, he calls Lazarus forth from the grave. So, our Lord Jesus regarded all this that accompanied the death of an individual as part of the kingdom of disorder, and being part of the kingdom of disorder, it affected him, and he did not hesitate to be indignant with respect to it.

We are not inclined to think of the Lord Jesus as a person who was indignant. We are inclined to think of a person who is indignant or angry that he has sinned, but that is not true. We read, concerning the Lord Jesus, in the 3rd chapter of the Gospel of Mark that when he went in the presence of unbelieving officials, he said, the Scriptures say, “He looked round about upon them with anger.” There is a time when a believer should be indignant, and he should be indignant at

untruth, at heresy. The Lord Jesus is indignant. It is, of course, characteristic of his human nature, and it is revealing of the fact that he was truly man apart from sin.

But there is another thing, I think, that to me at least, shines forth from this incident that has to do with his humanity, and it has to do with the quiet grace of the Lord Jesus through the whole event. Incidentally, when he arrived at the house, he doesn't say to Matthew or to one of the other apostles: now, we're going to have an interesting thing happen here, and we want to be sure to let the media in on it [laughter] so I suggest that you go as quickly as possible to the office of the local newspaper and tell them that something is going to happen so that they can get the cameras and all of the other equipment over here. Tell them, if they're looking for a headline, “Healing Happening Here Today,” and then we can have proper advertisement of the thing that is going to take place.

There is no placarding. There is no offering taken up, incidentally. As a matter of fact, when the Lord Jesus arrived at the house, he put everybody out except Peter, James and John, and the mother and the father of the little girl. Putting them all out, he himself with these goes in by the side of the little girl.

And not only does he put them all out, not desiring to have all that publicity—incidentally, when he finishes this—he charges them that they shall tell no man what was done. The Lord Jesus had perfect confidence in the power of God to publicize his own word.

But when he came into the home with the five others that were there besides the Lord and the little girl, he went over to the little girl and he did not stand above her and say to her, maid, arise. He reached down and took her hand in his hand, a token also of the fact that he did not want to awaken her and in such a way scare her by what she saw, but by taking her hand in his hand, he sought to comfort her even in her restoration to life. And what a beautiful picture it is.

In a moment, having raised the little girl, he commands the mother and father to give her something to eat; God, with a biscuit in his hand. It's a beautiful picture, you see, of the master of death but the man of feeling, and you see it all through Scripture: the Lord Jesus, as God with a tear on his face, or God with little children in his lap. These are aspects of the humanity of our Lord; he

was truly very man of very man. The word that he speaks to the little girl, according to Mark, is simply, “Little lamb, arise.” His voice penetrates the spirit world.

Now at this point, I want to say a word about some things that have been said concerning this event. The Lord Jesus, when he came, and entered into the home, had said as he arrived, “Weep not; she is not dead, but sleeps.” Some of the commentators have insisted, in the light of that statement, that this is not a miracle of healing at all; that the Lord Jesus is not performing a miracle of healing. What we have here is simply a divine diagnosis of her condition. She was only sleeping, and it’s not a miracle at all.

Now of course, the person who believes that is obviously a person who does not genuinely believe in miracles, and so how may we understand this account? Well, it was very customary for people to have what was known as a cataleptic coma. And as a result of these comas into which people fell in Palestine, it was only natural that since the Palestinians had to bury their bodies quickly because of the climate in the land, that frequently people passed into this coma, and then were thought to be dead, and as a result of that, since they had to be buried quickly—they frequently buried them on the same day in which they died at sundown—there were many people who were buried alive. The people thought they were dead, but they really were in one of these comas.

And so the interpreter to which I’m referring to has suggested that this is really what had happened. They misunderstood that she was living, and rather thought that she had died. And therefore, the Lord Jesus does not perform a miracle of healing here, but actually, only a divine diagnosis of the difficulty. She is not dead, but she sleeps.

It is true that the word that it is used and rendered here, “sleep,” is not the ordinary word for the believer’s death. You know, of course, the apostle uses the word, sleep, for death. He uses that because when a man dies in Christ, he’s resting, he’s living—because people who are sleeping are resting and they are living—and furthermore, since ordinarily when you fall asleep you expect to have an awakening, so in the case of the believer, he is asleep—he is resting, he is living—and he is to have an awakening at the resurrection being given a body like the Lord Jesus Christ’s own body. It’s a

very beautiful figure for a Christian’s death. And incidentally, the word that I am speaking about is used only of Christians in the New Testament. But this is a different word, and the commentators have called attention to that.

Now, I do not believe that this is not a miracle of healing. I think it is a miracle of healing. I confess that it is a different word, but there is no reason why this word cannot be used for a sleep of death. Furthermore, you’ll notice verse 53, “And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.” Luke goes out of his way to say that those people knew she was dead. In other words, he seems to give his approval to what they say. But in verse 55 we have the thing that clinches the question, for we read, after the Lord Jesus said to her, maid arise, “Her spirit came again.” So evidently, her spirit was gone.

We know that when a person dies, his spirit goes to the Lord. His body remains here until we place it in the grave. When a believer dies, his spirit goes immediately to be with the Lord, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Our body is here. It’s still on the bed. We call the funeral parlor, and they come and take the body, preparing it for burial, two or three days later a funeral service. The body is still here, but the person is gone and with the Lord. But we read here that her spirit “came again,” which suggests that Luke considered her spirit to be gone, and if her spirit was gone, she was not in cataleptic coma; she was dead.

Now finally, to make this interpretation as ridiculous as it really is, let me ask you this. Let’s just suppose on the interpretation of the commentator that it is not a miracle; it is only a divine diagnosis by the Lord Jesus, contrary to their diagnosis. And he stands by the side of this woman in a cataleptic coma, and he says to her, maid arise, and she awakens. Now I ask you the question, if the Lord Jesus is not a person who performs miracles, but is only a man, is it possible for a man and his word to arouse someone from a coma? You see, it requires the miraculous to do even that. So, it seems to me that the account, as well as common sense, lead us to believe that this was truly a miracle that the Lord Jesus had performed, and that accounts for the fact that her parents were

amazed, and the people in one of the other accounts left astonished over all of the things that the Lord Jesus had done.

Now let me just say a few words in conclusion. This incident clearly portrays the Lord Jesus as truly God and truly man, and man as a Man of Feeling. We are told in 1 John, “He that abideth in him ought himself so to walk as he walked.” If it is really true that he is truly God and truly man, and if it is true that we are related to him, John says, “If we abide in him, we are to walk even as he walked.” That is, that compassion and feeling should characterize the true Christian.

Thomas à Kempis wrote a very interesting book—it’s a very good book—and it was called *The Imitation of Christ*. It is important that we learn the things that characterized the life of Jesus Christ as a guide for us under its direction. But at the same time, imitation is not enough. Imitation is, generally speaking, a likeness of that which is outward. What is needed is more than imitation; what we need is union with the Son. And the Scriptures tell us that when we believe in the Lord Jesus, he comes to indwell us by the Spirit. And having been united to him, he is able to live his life out in us so that we do walk as he walked.

You’ve often wondered, I’m sure, why it is that little children imitate their parents? Now they imitate their parents not simply because their parents are an example to them. Sometimes, it’s funny. You notice how a little child walks. I noticed this about my little grandchild two weeks ago, when I was in Birmingham, Alabama. My grandson—my only grandson, incidentally [laughter]—my only grandson, he has a funny little gait. Of course, he’s only three years old; I don’t know how he’s going to walk later, but I looked at him, and I saw him running in the yard, and he looks exactly like his father walking. It’s sad. [Quick, loud laughter] I was hoping he would walk like me.

But, it’s a hopeless case, because the life of the father is in him. And it does not come because he has observed his father walking and has sought to imitate him—the life of the father is in him. That’s the reason, ultimately, why children are like their parents. It’s not simply because they imitate them. It’s because the life of the parents is in them. And in the Christian life, it is impossible

for us to imitate the Lord Jesus effectively apart from his own indwelling within us, and that is why the doctrine of union with Christ is so important.

And finally, in this incident, we see him as the master of death, and this is a story of his power. It illustrates his power of regeneration. The Apostle John in the 5th chapter of his Gospel has a word that has to do with regeneration. He says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.”

Notice that statement: the hour is coming and now is when they that hear the voice of the Son of God shall hear and they shall live, and that hour is now here.

In other words, the Lord Jesus is able, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to penetrate the deadness and penetrate the inability of men to come to him, and to bring them to himself. The voice of the Son of God penetrates the spirit world. And just as it penetrated the spirit world to raise that twelve-year-old girl to life, it penetrates the deadness and inability and darkness of the human heart and brings us to life. This is a beautiful illustration of what happens when a man comes to faith in the Lord Jesus.

It is an illustration of the power of resurrection. John goes on to say, “Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice.” And as he spoke and this girl came back to life, and as he spoke by the grave of Lazarus saying, “Lazarus, come forth,” it illustrates the things the Lord Jesus is able to do in resurrection. And it also illustrates the power of reunion, because he brings back together again father and mother and daughter. And notice that the only term of reception of the blessings of the Lord Jesus is the term, believe. Only believe, and she shall be made whole.

There are preachers who go around and like to talk about “easy believism,” and by that they attack preachers who claim the only condition—if I may use “condition” for just a moment—the only condition or the only term upon which we receive eternal life from God is faith in the Lord Jesus. They don’t like that. They like to say, no, it is not easy believism, but rather, we must believe in the Lord Jesus and make him Lord of our lives. Now, that is a confusion of justification and

sanctification. Justification takes place through faith in the Lord Jesus, and the life that follows is a life of sanctification in which, over a period of time, the Holy Spirit works in us so that Jesus Christ is made Lord of our lives. Now mind you, the Lord Jesus is Lord, whether we believe in him or not, and no person becomes a Christian who does not believe that Jesus is the Lord, but the making of him Lord is sanctification and not justification.

Those who say that there is anything other than faith necessary for salvation, are confusing justification and sanctification, and the one who invented easy believism is our Lord Jesus himself, for he said, “Only believe.” Now of course, faith, as we have been saying, involves knowledge, *notitia*, assent or conviction that the facts that we know are true, *ascensus*; and *fiducia*, or trust in the one whom concerning these facts speak. So that faith is knowledge, assent, and trust. So when we know the gospel and are convinced that it is true, and rely upon him whom these facts speak, at that moment we pass from death into life, from darkness into his marvelous light.

There is an old story which I like. In the broad Scottish translation of the New Testament, John 3:16 reads something like this, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever listens to Jesus should not perish but have the life of the ages, *lhippen*.” We don’t use that word anymore. It’s a Scottish word; it means to trust or rely.

Thomas Chalmers is one of the most famous of the Scottish theologians. If you travel to Edinburgh today, you’ll find statues of Thomas Chalmers. Mr. Chalmers was visiting one of the members of his church one day. She was a rather elderly woman, and he was trying to bring her to faith in Christ and the peace that comes from justification, but he couldn’t get her to understand what “believe” was, and he kept using the term, believe, and tried to explain it to her. And finally, he gave up and began to make his way home.

And on his way home, he had to cross over a shaky old bridge. And as he was crossing over this bridge, gingerly making his way across so that he wouldn’t fall into the little stream that was under it, one of his other parishioners saw him and called out to him and said, “Doctor, can ye nay lhippen the bridge?”

And he said, “Lippen, lippen! That’s the word that woman needs!” He turned around, he went back to her and said, “I’ve got the word for you.” And she said, what is it, and he said, “Can ye nay lippen to Jesus?”

She said, “Lippen? Is it just to lippen? Aye, I can lippen to him. He’ll never let ye dune, will he?” And that’s true. Lippen. It means to trust, rely. It’s faith.

If you’re here this morning, and you’ve never believed in the Lord Jesus, he’s died for sinners. And if you can lippen to him, if you can rely upon him and stop trusting in your church, your works, your baptism, and all the other things in which you have put your trust, you may pass from death into the marvelous life of the Son of God. May God the Spirit speak to you. Let’s stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Again, Father, we are so grateful to Thee for the privilege of the study of the Word of God, and especially for these incidences which so beautifully reveal the Lord Jesus as the Master of Death and the Man of Feeling.

And we pray, O God, if there is someone in this auditorium who has not yet come to the knowledge of life in Christ, we pray that through the Holy Spirit they may be brought to him. May grace, mercy and peace go with us.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.