



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Matthew 25:14–30

Gospel of Matthew

“The Parable of the Talents, or Traders for the Master”

TRANSCRIPT

The exposition of the Word of God today is the exposition of Matthew chapter 25 verse 14 through verse 30, so if you will turn in your New Testaments to that passage, we shall read beginning with verse 14. Now remember that the context is the context of the Olivet Discourse in which the Lord Jesus has given a strong doctrinal statement of the events that surround his Second Coming to the earth, and now he is applying the teaching that follows from the fact of his Second Advent, stressing the need for watchfulness in the light of his Second Coming.

He has urged, by means of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, that one be wise, which we have interpreted as meaning that one should have oil in one's vessel. And we have said that that means that there should be a condition of reality in the spiritual life, that if we have made profession of faith in the Lord Jesus there should be a personal relationship to him which results in the possession of the Holy Spirit. A right relationship to the Lord means that the Holy Spirit dwells within us, and if we do not have the spirit of Christ, we do not belong to him. And it is proper for us to ask ourselves the question, do we really know him whom to know is life eternal?

Now in the parable that we are to read now, the Parable of the Talents, faithfulness is stressed as we shall see. Beginning with verse 14 we read,

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling into a far

country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his ability; and straightway took his journey. (That word, straightway, the adverb in some of the Greek manuscripts and some of the Greek texts too, is taken with the 16th verse, and we then in those texts read): straightway he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same. (Now I'm going to take it that way, I'm going to take it that the straightway refers to the receiving of the five talents and the immediate trading with them. Verse 16 concludes with) and made other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and dug in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Then he that had received the one talent came and said,

Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown. (Incidentally these are expressions that were in common use probably, somewhat proverbial, and so the reference is to a man who has a plot of ground by the side of someone else's plot of ground, and when he reaps he reaps over his own borders and reaps in that which belongs to his neighbors) and gathering where thou hast not spread (and it was the custom so I understand; you understand of course that; I being a city boy; do not really understand these things; but from all I can understand it was the custom for the grain to be spread out upon a floor and then it would be threshed and as a result of the winnowing that followed in which the chaff was blown away the heavier grains would be left. Well, apparently it was the custom in those days for some stealing to take place. In other words, human nature has not changed a whole lot down through the years and the result was that occasionally men stole from others as they were engaged in the process of threshing and winnowing, not having spread it out themselves, so they took advantage of their neighbors and stole, and evidently this man considers the Lord, his lord, to be that kind of person.) He reaps where he has not sown he gathers where thou hast not spread. And I was afraid, and I went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast what is thine. (Incidentally in the Greek text at this point it's a very brief and abrupt statement something like, Look you have what belongs to you; that one talent. Verse 26): His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant,

“The Parable of the Talents, or Traders for the Master” by S. Lewis Johnson  
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didst thou know that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not spread: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with interest. (The exchangers are the equivalent of our modern bankers and so he said, If you really did know that I was a hard man, and that I reap where I have not sewn and also I gather where I have not spread, that I'm that kind of person you at least ought to have taken my money and given it to the banker so that I could get my one talent back with a little interest. The Authorized Version renders that, incidentally, usury but that is a mistranslation. Verse 28): Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him who hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. (Modern translation of that is them that has, gets, but [laughter] that is not really the force of our Lord's statement and the Parable of the Ten Talents concludes on the same monotonous refrain that many of the other statements of and sections of this Gospel have concluded upon:) And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his Word.

The subject for this morning in our study of the Scriptures is “The Parable of the Talents, or Traders for the Master.” Sixty-nine times in the writings of the fathers occurs the saying, unrecorded in the Synoptics or the Gospel of John, “Show yourselves approved bankers.” It was evidently a very popular saying among the early churchmen. Show yourselves approved bankers.

Now I don't know the reason for that. Everybody would like to be a banker of course.

Perhaps it's related to that. But probably it has arisen from not only this parable but other statements in the New Testament which express the fact that the truths of the Word of God are committed to us as a trust. For example, the Apostle Paul says to Timothy more than once that he should guard the deposit, or the things that have been committed to him. Regardless of how this statement arose, it is a very apt saying and it has its application to each one of us, because we have been endowed with gifts by our Lord for Christian service if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, if we are not believers we have also been endowed with certain gifts, certain talents that we have naturally, and we are responsible, whether we be believers or unbelievers for the exercise of these gifts that have been given to us. We are responsible to faithfully use them for the glory of God. I'm sure that it is the desire of God speaking from the standpoint of what is pleasing to him, that those who are unbelievers who have certain gifts should exercise those gifts in the light of the knowledge of God and ultimately come to the knowledge of him. But we are responsible for faithful use of the things which have been conveyed to us by a sovereign God in heaven.

Now this parable, as well as other statements of the New Testament, stress the fact that we are to be judged according to the standard of fidelity to the things that have been given to us and the purposes for which they have been given. We are to be judged, not according to the standard of quantity, but the quality of the work that is done which is a very comforting thing because it means that when we have little talent—little gift, evidently—we may receive the same reward as those who faithfully minister a much larger and to men at least more significant gift.

Alexander McLaren, who has been called the “prince of expositors” by some, has entitled this section, “Traders for the Master,” and I have borrowed part of that for the title of the message today. If it is true then that we have been given certain things for which we are responsible, then, as one of the Puritans has said, “O, be ashamed Christians that wordlings are more studious and industrious to make sure of pebbles than you are to make sure of pearls.” I think it is true that often the world is far more energetic and diligent in the full development of the talents that they have been

given by providence than we are in the development of the gifts that have been given to us by a gracious God.

Now the Lord Jesus has been speaking about his Second Advent, we have been saying and he has been making application. He is saying that since he is coming back to the earth we should be watchful. In fact he has said in the 24th chapter that we should be faithful and wise servants. He has stressed wisdom in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, saying that we ought to have a relationship of reality to the Lord. Now he is going to stress the idea of faithfulness.

One of these essentially is the inward attitude toward the Lord in the light of his absence, and the other is the outward. Inwardly, we should be sure that we do have a relationship to the Lord that is real and vital, that we really know what it is to be a Christian, a genuine Christian who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and has received everlasting life and has the assurance of it, and then outwardly our lives should be characterized by faithful service toward him. In one of the other parables one very similar to this one the Lord Jesus used the words, occupy till I come. That I think is much the theme of the Parable of the Talents.

The primary reference is perhaps to the nation Israel, and the judgment referred to is Israel's judgment for rewards at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, but the same identical principle pertains with reference to the church. We, too, are to be judged according to the outward standard of the quality of our work, not the quantity of it, and inwardly or subjectively we are to be judged according to the principle of fidelity, or faithfulness to the things that the Lord has given to us. The apostle says, remember that we shall be judged with respect to our work, and specifically, he uses the statement of what sort it is. It's not how much; it's of what sort. So this Parable of the Talents illustrates this important truth, and that's what we want to look at in the time that we have this morning.

The parable is the story of a lord or a master who evidently was a very wealthy man, who must have possessed a number of servants—not simply three—so we would say that these three are simply representative men who planned to take a journey into a far country. And in order to see that

his goods were cared for while he was gone, he divided up his properties among several servants who were responsible to act as trustees for his property to trade with his property and get gain for him.

Then at the conclusion of his journey to the far country he returns and there is a reckoning—a judgment. Well you can see that the purpose back of this is to illustrate what is going to be true of the Lord, which he is not yet free to tell them, plainly. That he is going to come to the cross, he is going to be crucified, he is going to be buried, he’s going to rise again; but he is going also to ascend to the Father’s right hand and there he is going to remain for a considerable period of time, during which period of time the church is to be active upon the earth doing his will, serving him, trading for him so to speak.

But then he is coming back and there is to be a reckoning, and all of us are going to have to one day stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. The church and Israel and the Gentiles shall all ultimately be judged, each of us individually. It’s a frightening thing when you think about it. Sometime if you want to scare yourself, sit down and just limit yourself to the thought of standing before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. But that’s a very solemnizing experience, and a very fruitful one and a very edifying one in the long run, because we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

Now the story is very simple, and we’ll tell it and then make the application. As the man prepares to leave for his journey, he distributes his goods to his servants. He calls the servants. He assembles them all together, and he announces to them that he’s traveling to the far country and that he is delivering his goods to them. He speaks to one of the young men, calls him forward and says, I want to give to you five talents, and he gives him five talents and another is called, and he is given two talents, and still another is called and given one talent. The uncertainty of the advent makes it necessary for him to urge them to work in the interval in his separation from them. So you see he’s conscious of his soon exodus and also he desires to prepare them for the time when he would not be here.

Now we are in that time, so these words have a very special application to us. There is one word that sets the tone of the passage and I think it's the term, servants. He called his own servants. About six times that term is used in this passage, and we are to learn from this the fact that we are servants. We are all servants, and we are expected to act as servants doing during the absence of the king. The Apostle Paul stresses this in his epistles. He states that, we are today serving him.

The assignment of the portions is rather interesting. It's evident that the lord acts sovereignly. Now he gives one five. He gives one two. He gives one one talent. Now we assume, incidentally, since the lord is representative of the Lord Jesus, and it is representing him while he is absent, that these talents are designed to represent the spiritual gifts which he has conferred upon the whole of the body of Christ, not only the spiritual gifts of utterance and service.

Incidentally, every one of us has a spiritual gift. Some of us have gifts of utterance, and we should exercise our gifts of utterance like evangelist, pastor-teacher, teacher, exhorter, exhortation, teaching separately. But then there are also non-utterance gifts such as, helps ministries, governments, things that we can do that are just as important as standing behind a pulpit or behind a teacher's desk and teaching. Every one of us has a spiritual gift, and that means, incidentally, not only the men but also the women. We all have spiritual gifts, not only those who have reached maturity, but even children who are believers in Jesus Christ have been given a spiritual gift and ultimately they are responsible for using that gift.

I think perhaps there is more involved here than simply that, however. It seems to me that probably there is involved gifts of providence as well. And I say this in the light of the fact that this third servant, this one-talent servant, is obviously a man who is not a believer, because he's cast into outer darkness and there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, and yet at the same time he has been given something. So perhaps our Lord has not only in mind the spiritual gifts that are given to the church since the coming of the Spirit in a special way after the Day of Pentecost, but he has also those gifts of providential care given, which are given to men.



There are men who have great intellect. There are men who have gifts of wisdom. There are men who have gifts of graciousness. There are men who have gifts of eloquence. There are men who have gifts of health, and there are people who have gifts of time. All of the providential things with which God has enriched us, and many who do not even know Jesus Christ have been given great gifts, natural gifts. They are responsible to minister these gifts in the light of the divine revelation.

It is very striking too, that this parable says nothing about the power by which we are to minister the gifts. Now the Apostle Paul unfolds later on that this is to be done in the power of the Holy Spirit, because no one can minister his gift no matter how great the gift in his own strength and power. There is a story of a woman in Oklahoma whose car stalled on one of the country roads, and after a little bit of difficulty, she finally got hold of a garage repairman or a service station man, and he came out with his truck to her car and looked it over very carefully and said to her, I'm afraid you're out of gas. And she said, well will it hurt if I drive home with my gas tank empty? [Laughter]

Well, no, we cannot operate without some gas in the tank, and we cannot perform the gifts that God gives us in a way that honors him without the power of the Holy Spirit, but that is not set forth in this particular parable. That will come in the remainder of the New Testament when the Apostle Paul speaks concerning the enablement—enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

By the way the talent was a very, very large sum of money. It has been estimated that the talent weighed at a minimum of fifty-eight pounds, and if it was a gift if it was a talent of gold, it was extremely rich in value, and even if it were a talent of silver, it was extremely rich.

Now I took out my pencil and paper and on the basis of some things said in the New Testament. I figured that since the Lord Jesus told the parable in which a denarius was the wage of working man for one day, so that during the year he would earn three hundred denarii and since talent was equal to six thousand denarii, working on that as a basis and just using a minimum, minimum, barely meeting the standard of living a survival wage of \$7500, a year, why the talent would be worth at least \$150,000 in our money so far as spending money is concerned. So to have

five of them was to have a considerable amount of money entrusted to the man of five talents. So this is the entrustment by a very wealthy man of a considerable portion of his goods to the five talent servant.

The principles that are set forth here are very simple. I'll just state them. Gifts are given according to one's capacity, but remember it is God who gives capacity. So what we have is a sovereign giving of gifts. Have you ever felt a little resentful that God gave someone an outstanding spiritual gift, and he gave you only an ordinary one? Have you at times felt envious that someone is able to stand behind the pulpit and speak eloquently while, when you get behind it, you can never remember what your next point is, and you stutter and stumble?

Or have you ever wondered why it is that some people have gifts of organization and you can never seem to get more than two things together at any one time? That another person can seem to take over and organize things and get it all done in a few minutes, whereas you plan for three months and then everything is a complete flop when it finally comes to pass? And what makes it even worse is that they seem to be able to do it without one drop of perspiration, whereas you've spent sleepless nights worrying about what's going to happen.

God does give differing gifts, but remember this, the lesson of this parable is that he rewards according to faithfulness. He doesn't reward according to the magnificence of the gift that he has given. As we shall see, he gives the same reward to the two-talent servant that he gives to the five-talent servant. And incidentally, there is no sense of resentment on the part of the five talent servant. The great lesson is that he wants faithfulness in his saints. He gives sovereignly in capacities and then gives gifts in accordance with the capacities that he has given us. He is a sovereign Lord.

Now these gifts that are given us are given to be traded. We are in business for the Lord according to this. We're like bankers in a trust department who have committed to them the estate of a man who has died and they are responsible not simply to conserve the assets—though that's first—but they are responsible also to handle that money effectively and well. In fact, if they bungle it they are subject to legal action. So we have been given gifts by God sovereignly, and we are responsible to

trade with them. We are responsible to gain things not for ourselves but gain for our Lord. For after all, all of the gifts that we have are not really our own ultimately they are the Lord's, and they are to be used for his glory and the edification of his people.

And it is part of the graciousness of our great God to have the right use of his gifts lead to the increase of these gifts to us, as the five talent and the two talent servants learned. Seed which is left in the granary breeds weevils and moths and worms, but when it is spread out, it yields more seed and in the meantime food for those who are hungry.

Now the description of the servants' labor given in verses 16 through 18 is very simple. The five talent servant—incidentally, who is a five-talent servant? Well this is all speculation of course, but I would put in this category Martin Luther. And I would but in this call category John Calvin. I would put in this category some of the men whom God has given with unusual gifts to the Christian church or some of the great men in the nation Israel.

Who is the two talent servant? Well men with lesser gifts as far as men are concerned. Perhaps a Hudson Taylor, a George Mueller—men who have not influenced the Christian world as a Calvin or a Luther, but who have nevertheless been unusual servants. The same obedience is reflected in the description of the labor of these two. The five-talent servant gains five talents; the two talent servant gains two.

The one talent servant, well he was a man who is ultimately cast into outer darkness, so it is evident that he was not even a believer, but a professing believer a professing servant, one who perhaps who has been in the Christian church, but who nevertheless has no real relationship to the Lord like the five foolish virgins. Who shall we put in that category? Well I'd put Pelagius there, but I don't want to run a good thing into the ground [laughter]. You can put in there whoever you like. It is obviously a person who has an outward relationship to the Christian church or the testimony of God but who does not have an inward relationship.

The distribution of the rewards is the climax of the story and in verse 19 we come to the account of what happened when the lord returned after a long time. Incidentally, that again is

acknowledgment of the fact that there will be a lengthy period of time between the first coming and the Second Coming, and the lord of the servants shall come and he shall have a reckoning with his servants. In other words, there will be a time of judgment.

The five talent servant comes forward with his five talents, gives him five and says, sir I have also gained five. He receives the commendation, well done thou good and faithful servant. Incidentally, that word, good, is to be interpreted by the following adjective. He’s good because he’s faithful, as the following words show. Thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Isn’t it wonderful that we have such a God who is so great as to lavishly bestow upon us these giant privileges of a spiritual gift to start with and then on top of this, this lavish, freely bestowing God gives us not only a spiritual gift but a reward for the faithful exercise of the gift that belongs to him? Now you could not have a greater master than that.

And incidentally you will notice, too, that his fidelity is praised. He’s not praised for his creativity. He’s not praised for his ingenuity. He’s not praised for his brilliance in gaining a dollar in making deals. He is not praised for his success. It is simply faithfulness. And when he says to the servant that he is to have, he is to become ruler over many things, we have an indication here that in heaven there is order and government. Isn’t it great to realize that heaven is going to be an organized place? It would be terrible if it were chaotic.

And further, do you notice here he says you have been faithful with respect to a few things? Well there are some people in this room to whom \$750,000 is a few dollars, but for most of us it’s quite a large amount. And if our Lord calls that “few things” and says that the faithful servant is going to become ruler over many, then how large must the many be? This is the privilege of those who pass into the presence of our Lord throughout the ages of the kingdom and eternity, to be ruler over many things and greatest of all enter into the joy of thy Lord. Who could describe that?

When the five faithful virgins, the wise virgins, entered into the marriage feast and the door was shut, no description is given of the joy of the marriage feast, because we cannot possibly describe

the joy of the presence of the Lord. There is no way for us to explain what is going to happen when we enter the presence of the Lord. That’s why the Bible is silent about that. In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore. What kind? Who can know what they shall be?

Some of us would think that infinite pleasure would be looking at a TV screen and seeing the Cowboys win every time [laughter], but I’m sure it’s going to be greater than that. We’re coming to the end of the warm feeling that I’ve had all this week after last Sunday’s engagement in the stadium. [More laughter] The joy of the Lord is a joy that is unspeakable. It is unbroken. It is unshaded. No one could possibly explain how great it is, and so it’s simply enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. We’re not qualified to understand what heaven is like in our present status.

The two talent servant comes with his two talents, and amazingly he hears the same words that the five talent servant hears. He hears the same identical phrases. Well done, good and faithful servant. Thou has been faithful over a few things; I’ll make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Exact repetition. In other words, the same reward is given to the servant with lesser capacity and smaller gifts, as for the greater. There is here, I think, the primary principle in this passage, and it is that we are rewarded according to faithfulness.

Now that is important. That means that when we enter the presence of the Lord—and I fully expect to find Calvin and Luther there, incidentally—that when we enter the presence of the Lord, we may not find around the presence of the Lord are all of those who have been outwardly, the most obviously faithful men in the history of the Christian church. We are going to find that there are men of low capacity whose name we do not even know, who are just as close to our Lord, just as rewarded by him as some of the great men of who we are speaking. Men of low capacity, but equal faithfulness shall sit right in the midst of the greatest of them all.

I always remember the story of Whitfield the Calvinist and Wesley the Arminian, and the Calvinistic friend of Whitfield’s who was like some Calvinists. He rather thought that Arminians were not going to be saved at all, even if they were believers in Jesus Christ or professed it. He just

doubted their faith. And in addition, he was a very judgmental kind of person, and dour, and hard like some Calvinists I’ve known. There are three that I know like that. [Laughter]

This man went to Mr. Whitfield and he was very upset because evidently the Lord was blessing Mr. Wesley’s ministry, and he said, “Mr. Whitfield, do you think we shall see Mr. Wesley in heaven?” He obviously wanted the answer, no. So Mr. Whitfield said no, and he looked a little pleased until Mr. Whitfield continued. He said, “No we shall not see Mr. Wesley there. He shall be so close to the Lord that he’ll be lost in the brightness of his glory, and he will be invisible to us where we stand on the edge of the crowd.” [Laughter] These men of low capacity but high faithfulness shall enjoy the joy of the Lord.

And finally, the one talent servant. This servant is one who thinks of the master as hard. Incidentally, that word means churlish, not only hard but harsh. He thinks of him as harsh. He thinks of him as a man who takes advantage of others. He reaps where he has not sown; he gathers where he has not spread his grain. In other words, he looks at our Lord or his lord as a legalist. He evidently thinks that it is only possible to please this man by doing that which is wrong. He thinks that perhaps only by harsh obligations and the meeting of them can he possibly please him. He doesn’t understand the graciousness of his master at all.

And so our Lord speaks to him very, very harshly. He says, first of all, that he’s a wicked servant and he’s wicked because he is slothful, just the exact opposite of the good and faithful above. And secondly, he says, If you knew that I was a wicked and harsh man, why didn’t you take my money and at least put it in the bank, and then I would have gotten my money back with a little bit of interest. So he points out the inconsistency of pretended fear, and the insolence of this man in throwing his talent before his master and saying, there you have what’s yours, which is the force of the Greek text.

So he first severely characterizes him as a person who is wicked and slothful. He then strips him of the gift that he has, which is very revealing. It means that when we enter into eternity without the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, we shall not have there even what we have here. The gifts that have

been given to us shall be taken from us and then the sentence of ejection into the midnight of outer darkness. Like Judas he fails and he hears the frightful monotony of, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Let me conclude by simply saying this. Trading with the riches of Jesus Christ is the highest and noblest enterprise in which a man could be involved. And each one of us has been given something by God with which we are to trade. Are you trading? Are you doing business for the Lord with the gifts that he has given you? Are you really actively seeking to honor him and glorify him in what you are doing? The time is coming when you shall stand before him as judge, and you shall hear either, well done thou good and faithful servant, or some lesser accolade, or the opposite of wicked and slothful servant.

The principles are clear. Let me conclude by simply naming them. Jesus Christ, according to this parable, is the owner of everything. We are trustees. Everything that we have is a gift from him, and we are responsible to use it for his glory. Our intellect, our wisdom, our riches, or influence, our position or our spiritual gifts, whether they be utterance or non-utterance gifts. They are given us in trust. We are like the vice-president of a local bank whose work is to exercise supervision over trusts that have been committed to them.

He gives gifts sovereignly in differing capacities. Nothing is more false to nature, and nothing is more false to the nature of the Christian church than the doctrinaire theory of equality. We are not equal. We are not equal in the giving in the gifts that have been given to us by God, but we may become equal in faithful service with the gifts that we have.

He gives universally. All have gifts so all are responsible. He judges universally, and we cannot escape from blame by minimizing the gift that we have received or by blaming him for not having given us what we would liked to have had. This flimsy excuse of the one talent servant for his indolence does not work with the master judge. He judges according to fidelity. As the apostle expresses it, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. Faithful. Isn't that an encouragement? Faithful. It's great to know that I am not charged with responsibility for gifts greater

than I have, but faithfulness in the gifts that I do have, little though they may be. To fail to get gain, to be idle and unprofitable, is to be condemned.

There is no standing still, incidentally. You cannot say I’ve been given a little gift. I’ll just hoard this for the Lord, and I’ll give him that gift not losing any of it. No you either are advancing or you are going backward in the Christian life. It’s always that way. And finally, to fail in fidelity is to lose doubly. Negatively, we lose the talent that we have and positively we suffer the misery of an everlasting separation from God in outer darkness.

If you’re here this morning and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus, again we call upon you to acknowledge your sin and guilt and condemnation before him as set forth in the Word of God, and then we ask you by the power of the Holy Spirit to turn to our Lord Jesus Christ who has offered the sacrifice for sinners that is sufficient for your salvation, and we ask you in the grace that Jesus Christ gives and in the power that he gives, that you turn and rest upon him and what he has done for time and for eternity.

May God help you to come to the conviction within your heart that you are not resting upon your church membership or your good works or your education or your family connections or the benevolences that you have benefitted this community with, but finally that you stand upon the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, realizing that you have suffered the penalty of sin in a substitute and therefore are free from judgment and possessed of everlasting life. May God bring you to that conviction. Let’s bow together in a word of prayer and stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit be in, abide with all until he comes again.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.