



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various Scriptures

"Miscellaneous Topics #29: Personal Consolation

From the Resurrection"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading this morning is from several passages in the New Testament and the first of them is from 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 12 through verse 19, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 12, through verse 19. This passage, as you well know, I'm sure is in the midst of the apostle's doctrine of the resurrection as it pertains particularly to believers. And in the 12th verse he writes,

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. "

I'd like for you to turn back to the last chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 28 and will you listen as we read the famous passage that has to do with the Great Commission, Matthew chapter 28, verse 16 through verse 20. And the evangelist Matthew writes,

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Now, turn with me to Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 1, and we read just a few verses of the apostle's prayer that concludes that first chapter. Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 19; the apostle is praying that certain things may be done for the Ephesian believers and that they may come to know certain things. And in verse 19 he writes,

"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

And finally, turn with me to John chapter 11, and let me read verses 25 through 27. This is the chapter in which the death of Lazarus is recorded, and also the resurrection of Lazarus by the Lord Jesus Christ:

"And as he drew near to Bethany Martha came out to speak to him and had to said to him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." And the Lord Jesus had given her the promise, "Thy brother shall rise again." And Martha replied, knowing something about the doctrines of the Jewish faith and the Old Testament Scriptures, said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

And then in verse 25 these famous words, part of one of the great "I am" statements,

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Like Lazarus, " And whosoever liveth and believeth in me," like Martha, "shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

May the Lord bless this reading from his word.

[Message] The subject for this morning in the exposition of the word of God is "Personal Consolation from the Resurrection." We might just as well entitle what I want to say to you as "What the Resurrection Means to Me Today" because I want to stress some of the more personal comforts that we have by virtue of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is a risen Savior.

When we think of the glorious event of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, there are certain things that especially stand out. And there are some things that stand out to me. I know that this is a very broad subject even if we speak of the experiential side of the effects of the resurrection, but there are new and refreshing thoughts that often come

to believers when they reflect upon this great even of a Savior who lives after death. There are always some things that we need to keep in mind when we talk about the resurrection because it is a doctrine that has been corrupted a great deal, even by professing Christians.

Now, when we speak of resurrection, we mean bodily resurrection. We do not mean that the spirit of Jesus has survived like the reputation of a man after he has died. When we speak of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus we mean the resurrection of our Lord's body. In fact, as Professor James Denney of the University of Glasgow said in his great work *Jesus and the Gospel*, "If we cannot speak of bodily resurrection we should not speak of resurrection at all." So when we speak of resurrection we are talking about the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another thing that we need to keep in mind is the fact that the resurrection is peculiar to Christianity. It's not something that has ever been claimed in Judaism. No resurrection, for example, was ever claimed for Abraham, the father of Judaism. Nor had any resurrection been claimed for Buddha. The Buddha died according to their own sacred books, "with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind." Nor has a resurrection been claimed for Mohammed whose tomb is annually visited by devout Mohammedans at Medina. The Buddhist has a glorious temple in which is contained the tooth of the Buddha. And the Mohammedans have a coffin in which the dust of the prophet Mohammed molds. But Christians have a living Savior. It is a doctrine that is peculiar to Christianity and marks out Christianity from all of the other religions upon the face of the earth.

The denial of the resurrection is a heathen response to spiritual things. And so when we think of those even within the Christian church who deny the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus we should remember that the denial of the physical resurrection is a heathen view point. It is not a Christian viewpoint at all. When the Apostle Paul preached in the city of Athens in Acts chapter 17 in verse really in verse 32

through 34, certain responses are said to have been given. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said we will hear thee again of this matter. Nevertheless certain men joined him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

The laughter of those who heard the apostle preach on the day that he preached in Athens has echoed down through almost twenty centuries. But the laughter of the Arepagos is an expression of a heathen viewpoint. Plato, it is true, argued for a future life in the *Phaedo*. But he did not understand the doctrine of the resurrection. They thought, and he thought, that the body was a kind of prison of the soul, and consequently for the thought of the spirit returning to the body was a thought that was not very pleasant for them.

We even have forms of the denial of the resurrection among the professing Christians in the New Testament. There were Hymenaeus and Philetus whom the apostle said have erred from the faith, because they have said that the resurrection has occurred already. So when we think of the denial of the resurrection, the denial of the bodily resurrection, we are speaking of heathen viewpoints. And if a man clothes himself in the garments of the profession of the Christian faith and nevertheless denies the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, you can put it down as true that he is expressing not a Christian viewpoint but a non-Christian viewpoint.

Now, many things are implicit and explicit in the teaching concerning the resurrection. Of course, in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus we have assurance that there is life after death. We have assurance that there is victory over evil, for evil put him on the cross, and when he rose again from the dead that is a sample of the ultimate victory that shall be obtained by righteousness over evil. It also reminds us of the fact that we can trust the love of God, because we really could not trust the love of God, if the Lord Jesus Christ had not risen from the dead on the third day. How could we say that God is love if the only good man who ever lived, the only man who ever perfectly and

completely obeyed the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified by wicked men, and his life was wiped out. How can we trust the power of God, if it is possible to conceive of the Lord Jesus not being raised from the dead then we can conceive of the powers of evil saying finally, "We've won. We've won." And the victory belongs to them. So through the resurrection, we know that we can trust the love of God. We know we can trust the power of God. We know that God's enterprise will ultimately triumph in the earth as a result of the resurrection. And the apostle states in that same chapter in Acts chapter 17 when he was preaching to those who were in Athens, that the resurrection is an assurance of ultimate judgment for all men who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, "He is appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, concerning which he has given assurance unto all men, in that he has raised him from the dead." And so the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ should strike fear into the hearts of any who have not yet come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the assurance that there is to be an eternal judgment.

When we think of Easter itself, Easter then becomes something like a consoling interpretation of Good Friday. Now, it's one of the sad things that pertains to religious art that it stresses so much the suffering Savior on the cross and has so little of the consoling resurrection from the dead. Just recently in London in the National Gallery again I was impressed with this, and some of the greatest of the paintings men have painted, the religious art paintings of the middle and later ages are characterized by the Lord Jesus Christ hanging upon a cross and suffering, great stress lying upon the physical sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no, or often no understanding of what is really transpiring, no stress upon the spiritual death of the Lord Jesus as over against that physical death only. And then very little stress upon the resurrection, a risen Savior who is alive today, but Easter has within itself the consolation of being the interpretation of what happened on Good Friday. It was a victory after all. It might have seemed to those who observed it a defeat, but it was not.

Now, I would like to turn to, in the time that we have, the four passages that I have read and draw out of them some of the more personal things that we learn from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and really what the resurrection means to me, and I mean me, what the resurrection means to me today. And first of all I'd like for you to turn to that passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Now, there are many things, of course, that the resurrection means. I just want to center attention upon some that mean a great deal to me. It is a matter of supreme importance for gospel preaching, of course, to stress the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. A.M. Ramsey who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury said concerning the preaching of the apostles, "For them the gospel without the resurrection was not merely a gospel without its final chapter, it was not a gospel at all." And so they regarded the resurrection as a very important feature of their gospel preaching.

Now, later on we'll try to point out the exact force of the resurrection as over against the death, but for them they preached not only the death but the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, because of its evidential force. C.E.M. Joad, one of the British theologians who is best remembered as a man who was a liberal for most of his life but near the end of his life turned to faith in the Lord Jesus, a man of great influence, once said that if he were allowed to interview any person of the past that he might, he would want to speak to Jesus of Nazareth. And he said, "I would want to put to him the most important question in the world, did you or did you not rise from the dead?"

Well, in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 the apostle argues that the Lord Jesus Christ did arise from the dead and not only that but in the fact that he arose from the dead we have assurance that we, too, shall rise from the dead. There are three consequences of the denial of the resurrection the apostle says, and the first of these is the denial of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. If there is no resurrection then he did not rise from the dead. Notice his words in verse 12, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no

resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." And verse 16, "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen."

Now, what is the force of the apostle's argument? Well, it is simply this, that Jesus Christ is man. And if it is true then there is no resurrection of dead men, then Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead for he, too, is a man, such as we are. And so the first consequence of the denial of the doctrine of resurrection is the denial of the doctrine of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. But there is another consequence, and that is the emptiness of the Corinthians' faith. He says in verse 14, "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Now, this morning I'm preaching from the Authorized Version, and in verse 14 the apostle says, "Your faith is also vain." In verse 17 he will say, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain." The translators of the Authorized Version have used the word vain to render two different Greek adjectives. One in verse 14 is the adjective *kenos*. And the adjective in verse 17 is the adjective *mataios*.

Now, *kenos* is an adjective that means something like this, it means that whatever is *kenos* is void of content. So when he says our preaching is vain and your faith is vain if Christ be not risen, he means that the content of the preaching does not exist. You say that Christ rose from the dead, but if he did not rise from the dead you are not preaching anything that really has any content at all. It's like a man preaching a mirage. There is no content whatsoever. You say that rose from the dead. You proclaim that as a doctrine, but if he did not rise from the dead, your faith is empty and also your preaching is empty.

Now, he also in verse 17 through verse 19 stresses the loss to state of the Corinthians, this is the third of the consequences. Not only is their faith empty because it has no substantial content if Christ is not raised, but he says in verse 17 "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is *mataios*." Now that adjective has a slightly different force. It is an adjective that refers to that which is void of useful aim or effect. That is, it suggests that the goal that was designed by the resurrection is not attained.

Now, what is the goal that is designed by the resurrection? Well it is designed to be an evidence of the forgiveness of sins. But if the Lord Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead, then we have no evidence that the sacrifice that he offered is acceptable to the Father. And so far as we are concerned, since we have no resurrection, and therefore no evidence that that blood that was shed really covers our sins we are still in our sins. Those who have fallen asleep in Christ, thinking as they died they would pass into the presence of the Lord, discovered as they died that they really perished. And so consequently the Corinthians are lost. They are still in their sins. The New American Standard Bible renders this second adjective "worthless." "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." It does not secure what you thought it secured if Jesus Christ be not raised from the dead. When the gospel is preached in an auditorium such as this and there are some who respond, believing the message, they think as they are brought by the Holy Spirit to faith in Christ that when they believe that message they receive the forgiveness of sins. But if Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead they do not have the forgiveness of sins. They are still in their sins. Their faith is empty. The preaching is empty; they have not received what they thought they received.

On the other hand, if the Lord Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, then of course they are not in their sins. There is evidence given that they have been justified. Let's put it this way, by the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, when we look at it we see that atonement has been made. When we look at the resurrection we see that atonement has been accepted by the Father. Someone has said that it is God's amen, the resurrection, to Jesus Christ's "It is finished." And so I think, as far as I'm concerned, on the first day of the week, for we celebrate Easter every Sunday, and as a matter of fact every day in the week we have a living Savior. But on Easter Sunday, when we think particularly about the resurrection, one of the greatest things in my own mind as I think about the resurrection is this glorious position that I have by virtue of the fact that the Lord Jesus

broke the bars of death and came forth from the sepulcher on the first day of the week. I have the forgiveness of sins. And what a glorious position that is. Do you have it? Is that your own personal position before the Lord God? Do you know that your sins have been forgiven? It is the blood that has made an atonement. It is the resurrection by which we know that the atonement blood was satisfactory to the Father. The debt has been paid. If you don't know that, we invite you to come to the Lord Jesus Christ as an ambassador of him, and believe in him who has been raised from the dead, and through the resurrection have the assurance that your sins are forgiven.

Now, the second thing that the resurrection means to me is it is an assurance of an every present guide. Let's turn back to that passage in Matthew chapter 28, this very remarkable passage. Matthew is the gospel of the king and it reaches its natural consummation in these beautiful last few sentences of the 28th chapter. The King has been raised to leadership over the whole of the universe. The nation Israel and the nations of the Gentiles may have repulsed him, but nevertheless a little flock of believers has been gathered together. And that little flock of believers is to be the heralding force of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in order to support this little group of individuals who now face the world in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will case around their feebleness the impenetrable armor of his perpetual undying presence. It is fitting, incidentally, that the last glimpse of the Lord Jesus that we have in the Gospel of Matthew should be on a mountain top, because it began in a valley with his birth and the gleams of the dignity that are to come shining here and there but it ends on the highest summit, a short flight to the royal throne which the Lord Jesus occupies today.

Well, as the eleven disciples gathered there with the others, they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Now we know that after worship comes witness. And so the Lord Jesus now speaks of the prerogative that has been given unto him by the Father. "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This is the first of a triplet of sayings here. It's a simple majestic, inexhaustible statement in its claim of unrestricted

universal sovereignty. "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Human thought loses itself in trying to explain what is meant by "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Isn't it interesting as you read through the Gospel of Matthew you seem to note a growing authority on the part of the Lord Jesus. In the beginning he speaks of his authority to forgive sins on the earth. And then later on he says authority to act as the final judge of all men. That's a thing that strikes terror into the heart of any man. Those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ in this life must face him in the final judgment. So he says that he has been given authority to be the final judge of all men. He also speaks of having been given authority to determine the bounds of his own life. Then he speaks that he has been given authority over all flesh. But finally, this claim is the greatest of them all, "All authority is given unto me."

The Roman Catholic Knox, in his translation puts it this way, "He was given heaven earth to do what he liked with them." And that is exactly what we have here. "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Therefore," he says, "Go." Because you see ecumenical authority is the support and basis for an ecumenical commission. Because all authority is given to him, his disciples are to go to all the nations. There is no place on the face of this earth where the authority of the Jesus Christ does not obtain. And every single ambassador of the Lord Jesus, no matter where he goes, even in Iran, there the authority of the Son of God surrounds him. And even in those dark corners of the earth where there are men that are opposed to the truth of God with the violence and hatred of murder, it is there that the authority of the Lord Jesus is.

Now finally, in what Levertoff called "the greatest conclusion to any work every written," he said, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Now, that's a most remarkable result of the resurrection. Notice he says, "I am with you," not I shall be with you. He's our companion. He's our ally. He's not like a general who stays at headquarters and receives reports from his lieutenants, one lieutenant one day and one

lieutenant the next day, because the other lieutenant has already given his life by the time the next day arrives. He's not a general at headquarters poring over reports from them, but he's someone who went down in the trenches himself. "Lo, I am with you." And he says he's with us always. I love that expression in the original text, because it's an expression that means not simply that he's with us some of the time, every day, but he's with us through all of the days and all of the hours of the days. It's the accusative of the extent of time. And so all throughout the twenty-four hour period he's with us, and every twenty-four hour period. Not only is he with us all of the day, all of the minutes of every day, but in every kind of day too, the days of sunshine, the days of shadow, the days of happiness, the days of sadness, the days of rejoicing, the days of bereavement. The Lord Jesus Christ is with us.

And finally, he says it's unto the end of the age. There is no limit to the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the most thrilling of the missionary statements of the past couple of hundred years was David Livingstone of Scotland. If you ever have time in Scotland go to David Livingstone's birthplace and see the little room in which he grew up with a number of other children. It's not as big as this platform up here. And that young man grew up, went out to Africa, became one of the most famous of the Christian missionaries to Africa. In 1896 Glasgow University decided that they would honor David Livingstone. They conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws. And he rose to speak and replied in his native land, and the people who were there could not help but listen in respectful silence. He was a gaunt man then, haggard as a result of the hardships in tropical Africa. His left arm had been crushed by a lion. It was hanging helplessly at his side. And he announced to that great assemblage of people that he was planning to return to Africa without any misgiving and with great gladness.

And then he added, "Would you like for me to tell you the thing that has supported me through all the years of exile among a people whose language I do not fully understand and whose attitude toward me was always uncertain and often hostile? It

was this, 'Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' On these words I staked everything, and they never failed. And no believer who has ever staked his life upon those words, 'Lo I am with you always to the end of the age' has ever been disappointed, for those words are true and express the companionship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by virtue of the fact that he is a living Savior."

Now then, will you turn with me to Ephesians chapter 1 for a moment or two? In this wonderful prayer for divine revelation which the apostle makes on behalf of his Ephesian believers there is a remarkable statement in verse 19. He says that he wants them to know certain things. He wants them to know, "The eyes of their understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." But in the 19th verse he says, I want you to know, "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ." Now if the resurrection means the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and the assurance of an ever-present guide and Savior with us, it also is the measure of the believer's enablement as he lives the Christian life. He wants us to know the "exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe." And then if you want to measure that power he says, "It's according to the mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. That's the power that works in the life of every single believer.

The grandeur of Christ's resurrection both in itself and as a type of the believer's new life, no mortal mind has ever yet fully conceived. But it's set forth in the New Testament as the crowning miracle of miracles. It's the crowning miracle because it embraces in itself all others. Do you remember the Lord Jesus as he went about giving sight to the blind? He gave hearing to the deaf. He gave speech to the dumb. He gave power to palsied limbs and withered members. And have you ever thought of the fact that when the Lord Jesus Christ's body was lying in that tomb, and then on the first day of the week came alive, all of the miracles that he performed find their ultimate

manifestation in his own resurrection. For the eyes that were unseeing saw again. The ears that did not hear, heard again. The speech that had been stilled by death became his again. All of the miracle, the palsied limbs were now coursed through by resurrection life. It is the crowning miracle of all miracles, and therefore it is that which is the basis for his appointment as the Son of God with power, the apostle puts it.

If you think about the Lord Jesus Christ in his resurrection and in his death, you will reflect upon the fact that he was thrice dead. He was dead by crucifixion. He was dead by the piercing of his side. He was dead by the temporary enslavement in the cloths with which they wrapped his body. But on the day of the resurrection he came forth. He came forth from that three-fold kind of death. It's a magnificent expression of the power of God. In the Old Testament the measurement of what God would do for the people of God was the power that he wrought when he took Israel out of the land of Egypt in Micah. Micah speaks about that. He speaks, "According to the power that you worked when you brought Israel out of Egypt, so you work in the bodies of the saints of that time."

But in the New Testament it's the power of the resurrection that's the measure of the divine enablement that we have. That deliverance in the Old Testament included at least three miracles of power. There was the exemption from death because they were saved from the destroying angel. It was the defiance of the law of gravitation, because he made the waters a wall about Israel as he took them out of Egypt into the wilderness. And it was the overthrow finally of Pharaoh, and all the foes of Israel in the Red Sea. But when the Lord Jesus came from the grave there is the same threefold deliverance. There is exemption from wrath on the part of every blood-sprinkled soul. There is the defiance of gravitation and the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is the overthrow of all of the enemies of Christ by virtue of his session at the right hand of the throne of God. What a magnificent thing it is to read here. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he

wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." Inexhaustible resources are the resources of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not have to worry about enablement at all. If we are sure that we are following the will of God, we can be absolutely certain that the power that was used in the resurrection of Christ is the power that works in us. What a magnificent blessing that God has conferred upon all of the saints in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. That's one of the greatest things that the resurrection means to me. It means the evidence of the forgiveness of sins. And it means that a living Savior is with me constantly as my ally and companion. And it means that I never need worry about power, enablement to do the will of God.

And finally, the passage in John chapter 11, a magnificent expression also of what resurrection means. It means not only resurrection for the Lord Jesus Christ but it means resurrection for me. And it means eternal life. The Lord Jesus Christ said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." It's a beautiful passage, often used by me at funeral, because there is nothing that should be of greater comfort to us when a loved one has left the scene than the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Remember that the Lord Jesus is the only person qualified to speak of life after death. We have a great number of people today who are talking about life after death. You can forget almost all of it, because there is only one person who is qualified to speak of life after death. It's the Lord Jesus Christ, because he's been there, and he's come back to tell us about it. Now, I don't know of anybody who's been there and has come back to tell us, who has any assurance that divine authority rests behind their utterances. He alone is qualified to speak. He has the giant's head in his hand, and as Mr. Spurgeon said, "He's carried the witness of victory to the city of God." And he speaks out of the virtue of his unique position.

He says, "I am the resurrection and the life," Martha. I want you to understand that it's not simply a doctrine, though that's important. That's the foundation of things, but I am that doctrine. And furthermore, I am at the moment the resurrection and the life.

It's not simply something that shall happen at the last day, as you've said, Martha, but when you have me, you have the life that overcomes death. That's why he added, incidentally, resurrection for everybody shall be resurrected, even the wicked. He says, "I am the resurrection and the life." That is, the resurrection that means eternal life. It's the cause of the resurrection and the consequence. And incidentally if one expects to be resurrected and to have life afterwards, he must have the life that overcomes death. And only Jesus Christ has the life that overcomes death, no other life overcomes death. And if we are to survive the experience of death we must have the life that overcomes death, and that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. And every believer, even the simplest, even the newest believer possesses the life that overcomes death. Do you have it? Do you have that kind of life, the life that overcomes death?

Now, after having said that, like any good preacher he makes application. He said to Martha, "Martha, believest thou this?" For he wants her to move from adherence to this doctrine that was true of Judaism to confidence in him, to trust in his deity. He wants her to move from the general to the personal, "Believest thou this?" So you see, what he's really saying is, "Martha, if you have me you have resurrection." Later on he will say, "Because I live, you shall live also." So for the believer, death is no journey into the obscure night where the wild beasts are crying in the dark. It is the passing of all who are in Christ into a larger and brighter room. The resurrection means that I have the life that overcomes death. Edward the Confessor cried in his last words, "Weep not, I shall not die but live, and as I leave the land of the dying," that's our land, the land of the dying, "I trust to see the blessings of the Lord in the land of the living." Because when we have him we have life.

Well, we have a great hope in the resurrection. We are assured of the forgiveness of sins if we have believed in him. We have an unfailing divine guide both in our personal lives and in the local church. And furthermore we have sufficient enabling power to accomplish the will of God. And we also have a guide. In fact, we have the

principle and pattern of the joyous life with one who has the power to still the storms, release the demons, bind up the wounds, open the graves, cancel guilt, comfort aching hearts, and convey peace. He's one who lives, and yet at a point in time died for the sake of atonement but alive forevermore. He has the keys of death and Hades. And so we look forward with great anticipation to the resurrection for we know in having him we have resurrection unto life.

Alexander McClaren made a rather interesting comment I think. He said, "If all power is the Lord Jesus Christ's power, then none can ever be effective against his friends. And all power is given unto him. If he has all power then we need not fear, though we have all weakness, because in having him, we have all that meets our need." Now, a great hope ought to produce a great love in response. I love some words that Mr. Spurgeon spoke. I wish I had said this myself. They're such great words. He said, "Whether a man ever went insane with love to the crucified Redeemer, I don't know. I've never met such a case. But if I should ever go mad I should like for it to be in that direction. And furthermore," he said, "I should like to bite a lot of people when I was in that state, in order that they too might catch this madness, this insanity of love for Jesus Christ, for what a blessed subject it would be for one to be carried away with to become unreasonably absorbed in Christ crucified, to have gone out of your senses with faith in Christ." Well, I must say that is a great statement. I'd love to go mad because of love for Jesus Christ and him crucified.

These are some of the things that the resurrection means for me. It means that I'm assured of the forgiveness of sins, because when I see him raised I know that sacrifice is accepted. I know that I have someone as my constant companion. And I know that he has sufficient power for the measure of the enablement that I have as the power wrought when I was raised from the dead, and I know that in having him my future is secure for because he lives I shall live also. May God give you something of the same hope. We preach to you a crucified and living Savior who lives to make vital the things that he has

accomplished. Come to Christ. Put your trust in him. Receive the forgiveness of sins. Have the assurance of an unfailing sovereign guide and then ultimately resurrection and life forevermore with him. Come to Christ; put your trust in him. It's very simple, just acknowledge your own lost condition, your own need, acknowledge before the Lord God the sufficiency of the blood as an atonement for sins. And receive in grace the free gift. You don't even have to give your heart to Jesus, the Scriptures say, and we don't give him anything we receive. And so in faith believe the message and receive the gift of everlasting life. Come to Christ. Believe in him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house," the apostle says.

Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for the revelation contained in holy Scripture. And we are especially thankful, Lord, for the Savior who lives today. And though dead at one point in time for the atonement he now ever lives to make intercession for us and to accomplish the perfect will of God for the saints. Oh God, for those who in this auditorium may still be lost, bring them to their spiritual senses. May they recognize their lost condition, the sufficiency of the atoning blood, and may they flee from the wrath to come.

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]