



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various

“A New Heart for the New Year”

TRANSCRIPT

[AUDIO BEGINS]...as you can tell from the Scripture reading for today, today's message is not a continuation of our series in the Book of Revelation. It will begin again next Sunday and we will continue the exposition with chapter 16 of that book. But today we are reflecting upon the fact that we face a new year and some of the things that might be in the hearts of some of us as we look to that new year. So I'm asking you to turn to three places in the Bible. First of all, one verse in Matthew chapter 5, in the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, as you well know our Lord begins with a series of Beattitudes and this is the sixth of them.

Matthew chapter 5, and verse 8, and Jesus says, speaking to his disciples on the mount, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Now I'd like for you to turn to the Old Testament to Ezekiel chapter 36 and we will read verse 24 through verse 28. Ezekiel 36, verse 24 through verse 28. You will also recognize as you look at the verses the paragraph really begins about verse 22 and goes through verse 31, that these verses are set in the context of the Lord's promises to ethnic Israel in the light of the new covenant which has been announced to them and will be confirmed by our Lord in his death on the cross. But in verse 24 of Ezekiel chapter 36, the prophet writes, and these are the words of God,

“For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all lands, and bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean: I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you: and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh, (I’d like for you to particularly to notice that text. We will comment on it in the message, ‘I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.’ Put in New Testament language, this is a promise of regeneration.) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will be careful to observe my ordinances. And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be my people, and I will be your God.”

You’ll recognize the covenantal language in that last statement particularly. Now finally, one last verse, 1 Timothy chapter 1, and verse 5. And the apostle, as he begins his message to young Timothy, his apostolic legate, he says in the 5th verse, “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith.”

You’ll recognize that all of these passages have to do with the heart and that is the theme of the message this morning, A New Heart for the New Year. Let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks for the anticipations of Thy blessing in the future that Thou dost give to us. We look over the past, we give Thee thanks for the way in which Thou hast moved in our hearts, brought us to the knowledge of him whom to know is life eternal. And then set our path upon the pathway to the presence of God in heaven. We look forward Lord to the future because we see the guarantees of it in the past in the way Thou hast dealt with us through the Lord Jesus Christ, our great covenantal head and redeemer. We pray, Lord, Thy blessing upon the whole church of

Jesus Christ today and we ask that the year to come may be a year in which the whole church is more useful to Thee in the task of bringing the gospel to the individuals to whom it shall go.

We pray for faithfulness for the church. We pray for commitment and dedication to the Scriptures and to Thee. And we pray that in Thy grace there may be remarkable fruit as the word of God is proclaimed. We pray for this local church, for our elders, and for our deacons, and for the members, and the friends, and the visitors who are here with us today, we remember each of these and pray that the word of God may have free course in our lives. Not only today as the word is proclaimed, but in the days that lie ahead of us, by Thy grace.

We pray for the sick, we ask Thy blessing upon them. Give healing as it pleases Thee. Give enablement to those who minister to them, the physicians and the family and the friends. And may we have reason Lord to praise Thy name by virtue of all the enabling power manifested in our lives in the Holy Spirit. We thank Thee for our country. We ask Thy blessing upon our president in these trying days, in many ways, and in these great days of opportunity, in other ways. We pray for wisdom and guidance to President Bush and to the other governmental agencies under which we live.

We thank Thee for the savior who has loved us and loosed us from our sins, has made us free, has cleansed our hearts by his blood, and who has made it possible for us to look into the future with hope and anticipation and assurance. May Thy blessing be upon the remainder of this service. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] It's the time of the year that we think of next year and the thought that crosses our minds is, what will it bring. And since it's the end of a decade, it's not surprising that we and others are asking, what will the 1990s bring? What have the 80s brought? We're also reflecting upon. And as you look over the 1980s, I'm sure that if you are an evangelical believer you could not help but feel that the 1980s have left us very

little of real spiritual value. The news media confirmed that politics, economics, and social concerns predominate in our country. It's remarkable that in 1976, Newsweek magazine had as its cover story *1976, The Year of the Evangelicals*. The 1980s are the years, it would seem, of the dead spirit because there really has been very little that tends to the glory of God's word and to the glory of the redemption that is in Christ in the history of the 1980's.

Carl Henry, one of the leading evangelical interpreters of our age, in a book called the *Twilight of a Great Civilization*, the drift toward neo-paganism, has commented upon this fact and he has stated that the culture context that now envelopes evangelical Christianity differs markedly from that of forty plus years ago when he began his ministry, and bombards evangelicals with critical new challenges. “For the moment I merely mentioned,” he says, “the unmistakable reemergence of paganism in the West. The continuing growth and power of political atheism. The sinkage of secular humanism into raw naturalism. The erosion of general knowledge of cardinal Christian beliefs and the decline of public perception of their plausibility. The scrambling of world religions that nurtures skepticism about the finality of any and every religious faith.”

T. S. Elliot makes the comment and Mr. Henry notes it, “Paganism holds all the most valuable advertising space.” How true that is. We are literally overwhelmed with the voice of paganism and unbelief and it's no wonder that Mr. Henry, or Dr. Henry and others have made a point that as we look into the future we cannot help but say that pagans are coming. The barbarians are on their way. It's true, it seems to me, to the context in which we are living.

Well this morning in a different kind of message I'd like to turn to a few passages that express my wish for the new year. I'm speaking of myself but I hope that you will speak of yourself as we look at some of the things that we shall look at. Call it a resolution, if you like, but I think of it as a wish. I would like a clean heart. A new heart, if necessary, but a clean heart, and we look at a few passages that set forth this hope.

And first of all we'll turn to Matthew chapter 5, in verse 8, where the Lord Jesus himself speaks of the blessedness of a clean heart. This is the sixth of the Beattitudes which begin the Sermon on the Mount. They are great statements by our Lord and in verse 8, as he speaks to his disciples on the mount, he says, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

As you think about the Sermon on the Mount, you immediately want to look at the context and see specifically in which it is found and we noted that back in verse 23 of chapter 4 Matthew writes, “And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.” Teaching and healing are the things that characterize his ministry. And now in this great discourse on the mount to the disciples it's the sermon and then following in chapters 8 and 9, the signs. So it's teaching, and healing as Matthew has put it in chapter 4, in verse 23.

One also reflects upon the Sermon on the Mount teaching in the light of the remainder of the New Testament. Say, particularly, the teaching of the Apostle Paul. What is the relationship of this teaching with the teaching that the Apostle Paul gives concerning the Christian faith. It has often been said that since our Lord is speaking and he is addressing the multitudes and then goes up on the mountain and speaks with his disciples that this is something like a new Mount Sinai. And being on a new Mount Sinai he's offering new principles for his disciples by which they are to live. Some students of the word of God have even suggested that this is something like an interim ethic. That is, the disciples that our Lord has at the moment are to live by these principles as their ethical principles until the time of the coming of the Spirit and the presence of the Spirit and all that is involved in the completion of that revelation with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

One thing we note, the Beattitudes are not gospel. They are principles that generally convict us just like the law of Moses did. One reads these statements, “Blessed

are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven and looking intensely within us we tend to think that's a very despairing message because I certainly do not feel that I am poor in spirit. My problems are not poverty of spirit, my problems are that I think more highly of myself than I ought to be and so all of these statements tend to leave us with despair.

I know that Harry Truman used to say, that as far as the Christian faith was concerned, and he was a Baptist in good standing, that the Sermon on the Mount was all that he needed in this life. But if that was all that he needed and that's all he understood, he wouldn't have understood the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are people still today who turn to the Sermon on the Mount and say, “Give me the Sermon on the Mount.” And there's nothing wrong with the Sermon on the Mount. In fact one might say, “Well I would like to have the Sermon on the Mount,” too, only let us be sure to take all of it and let us be sure to take its primary message. Which is that one cannot possibly live up to the Sermon on the Mount without the redemption that is found in Jesus Christ, of which the Sermon on the Mount does not directly speak.

What this tells us is that if we are to have the blessedness that our Lord speaks about here there must be a consciousness of want and a consciousness of sin. So the proper response to the Sermon on the Mount, it seems to me, is the response of, say, the prodigal who said, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner,” or the response of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 7 as he dwelt with the sin principle that dwelt within him, “Oh wretched man that I am.” But now having said all of that, we look at this 8th verse, and Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Despair if detached from the preceding. This blessedness can only come from knowing our poverty, from knowing our mourning, and the mourning is not the physical weeping, but the mourning over the condition of our hearts, the blessedness of longing for and hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Well, this blessedness can only come from those who, by God's grace, are poor in spirit who are mourning over their lack, who are longing for the

righteousness that God alone gives. But as our purity in heart increase, Jesus says we shall see more and more of God.

John Calvin once said, “That all agree that purity of heart is the mother of all virtues, but there is scarcely a man in one hundred who does not put smart dealing in the place of the highest virtue.” One would think that Mr. Calvin was living in the 20th Century. He goes on to say, “So it is that those who are generally reckoned blessed who are very clever at weaving schemes of deception who craftily dodge round an issue whenever they do business, Christ gives no endorsement to the currency of the flesh when he calls those blessed who take no pleasure in cunning, but deal honestly with men and put nothing in their words or expressions, but what they have also in their heart. As the simple dealers are marked for their so-called lack of caution for not looking out for themselves as they should, Christ raises their vision. If they’re not so sharp-sided on earth they shall enjoy the sight of God in heaven.

What a magnificent condition it is to be one who is pure in heart according to our Lord’s words. The sure consequences of this is that they will see God. They see him, of course, here after when they enter into his presence but they will see him now in a very true sense. Jesus, when he was with his disciples, you remember, answered Philip’s question about, “Show us the Father,” by saying, “Philip, have I been so longtime with you and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” So to know God, to be as Jesus says, to see God is to see him in his word, for it reflects our Lord Jesus Christ. To know his presence, count upon the promises of the word of God, and to have the sense of communion with him. So we ask, as a necessary application, is this for me? Can I really say that I am one pure in heart and that I shall see God? Is it possible? Well the Scriptures make it plain that this possibility exists but only for the justified who have been justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Impurity unfits us for seeing purity. The plea that one must have as he reads this text is the plea of David in Psalm 51 where he says, “Create, O God, a clean

spirit within me.” That’s what I feel when I think of this. I want to pray, “Create, O Lord, a new and clean spirit within me.”

A few weeks ago I read the story of the conversion of Allen Gardiner. It’s one of the most remarkable things, I think, that I have read in a long time. Gardiner lived in the earlier part of the 19th Century. He was a young boy of about eleven, I believe, when Nelson won his great victory at Trafalgar and then lost his life. It made an intense impression upon the young man and he determined that he was going to be an English sailor. Well he turned out to be more than an English sailor, he turned out to be a very good one and ultimately became a commander in the English or British Navy. But his life as a remarkable expression of dedication to God. Even as a young boy he prepared himself for what he thought was going to be his life. Since Nelson was his hero there is an incident in his life in which his mother, when he was just a young boy, walked into his room late at night and looked for him because she saw that the bed was still made. She looked around the room and finally she looked over on the floor and there he was, asleep on the floor late in the night. She awakened him and asked him why he was on the floor sleeping at that late hour. He said, “I’m preparing myself for the future. I know that being what I want to be is going to be hardship after hardship and already I’m preparing myself for it.”

He did become what he wanted to become, he became an officer in the Navy. He was a lieutenant, he had also some unusually good experiences and evidences of unusual bravery. He was given a prize ship to sail home but at the same time his father and his mother were believers and he was not. He speaks of the years between the age 15 and the age 25 as years of which he would not like to say anything. He said, “Later on I knew that I was forgiven but it was very difficult for me to forgive myself for the kind of life that I lived during that time.”

His conversion is very interesting. Every now and then he would be touched in his conscience about the truths he had been taught as a young boy. He tells of one

instance when he was out in the East and he wanted to get a Bible, he determined he would give the Bible one more chance. And so he went to a bookseller's shop and he started to go in and he saw some individuals who were in there and he said, “I was so embarrassed about going in and asking for a Bible that I waited until the customers came out of the store. But as I would start in another customer would go in and I would have to stand out and wait for that customer to finish.” And finally after a considerable period of time in which he was unable to go in when nobody was there and ask for the Bible he said, “I finally got my courage up and walked in and said, “I would like a Bible,” and walked quickly out. And the story of conversion is a story that's rather surprising because you might expect that he would be converted through the reading of the Scriptures. But actually he was converted through correspondence. And the correspondence was of a letter that he had not anticipated receiving. His mother had died, I believe, and a close and intimate friend of his mother, knowing something about the kind of life he had now begun to live in the British Navy, wrote him a letter. He was in the streets of Malacca at the time in 1820 and the mail brought him two letters and one of them was from his father and it was full of rather grave rebuke for the kind of life he was living, but the other was from an old lady, an intimate friend of his mother's. And one of his biographers says, “Nothing would have seemed more hopeless than the chance that a letter from a religious old lady would make an impression on a dashing young naval officer. Yet Allen Gardiner always considered the receipt of the letter as the turning point of his life.

The letter began somewhat apologetically and the elderly lady spoke about the fact that she did not want to be censorious as she spoke to him, she didn't want to presume to lecture the young lieutenant, but for her mother's sake she begs him to read with patience the plea that her letter represented. She warned him of the deadening consequences of sin and then she reminds him that it was to save man from sin that the

Son of God lived and died. And she tells him that what he needs above all else was a new heart.

“Remember,” she says, “this is not my phrase, it’s the very word of Scripture. And unless we have a new heart, this clean heart, this heart of flesh, given in exchange for a heart of stone, we cannot believe effectually.” That’s very interesting. Unless you have a new heart you cannot believe effectually. We often, in the Christian church today, turn it around and say, “We believe and then we have a new heart.” But she has the biblical order. We cannot believe effectually unless we are the recipients of a new heart in regeneration from the Lord God. And she quotes from David, “Create in me a clean heart, O God,” and she quotes from the passage that we read this morning in Scripture from Ezekiel, “A new heart will I give you.”

Now Frances Ridley Havergal didn’t memorize Ezekiel, so Mark has said, but it has some marvelous texts within it and this is one of them. It’s the text, “A new heart will I give you.” “You will perhaps ask,” she continues in her letter, “how this new heart can be obtained. It’s the gift of God, exclusively. None but he can create it.” And then she goes on to say, in this urgent tone, “Nothing that is holier and purer can enter heaven, the change spoken of by the savior, you must be born again, must take place while we live, for as we are found in death we shall forever be. There is no repentance in the grave nor pardon offered to the dead.” She closes, and with these words, “It’s probably, dear Allen, that you and I will never meet on earth, and if not, let me hope that we shall meet in that place where all must hope to be, clothed in the Savior’s perfect righteousness.”

The lieutenant was so impressed by that letter he made two copies of it. More than one copy of it. He put one in his Bible and he carried it with him in all his subsequent voyages. A new heart. That’s what’s needed. When the Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God,” he means, “Those who have received the new heart from the Lord God, it’s they who truly will see God. Here and more fully hereafter.”

Now it's natural, I think, for us to turn to that passage in Ezekiel and to think about what the Lord God does say concerning the creation of a clean heart. Now you might say to me, “Well in Ezekiel chapter 36, the prophet is speaking about the children of Israel,” and that is true. He, in this particular context, is saying what he's going to do to national, ethnic Israel on a remarkable scale in the future. And these things are bound up in the new covenant. But remember, the principles by which the Lord God operates as he deals with Israel, are the same principles by which he operates when he deals with us, for it is the same God who operates according to the same principles. They are principles of his being. And the principle of dealing with us in grace is a principle of his being. And so as he deals with Israel and grace with his unconditional covenant which we will surely carry out for them, he deals with us in unconditional grace. Fitting us for what he intends to do for us.

Now you know, of course, that when we read of things like this we are faced always with the fact that there are two different approaches within professing Christendom with regard to grace. There are those who speak of grace and there are others who speak of grace, but when these two bodies of professing Christians speak of grace they do not mean the same thing. One approach goes along these lines, it's a grace approach. That is, they use the term grace and they lay great stress upon the fact that our salvation is bound up in the response of our free will to divine truth. Our free will, it is contended, has the power of cooperation, to make the grace of God effectual. A power of resisting to make ineffectual. In other word, our free will is able to respond positively, it is also able to resist effectually, and therefore our free will and the activities and responses of it are determinative for our salvation.

To put it very simply, what this means is that God must awake the action of the free will before giving grace. Let me say that again because this is what is meant by the doctrine of free will in professing Christianity. God must await the action of the human free will before giving grace, because if the free will decision is the first decision and it's

only by that that grace becomes effectual, it's clear God must wait for the action of the free will before giving grace.

Grace means moral persuasion to them. Moral persuasion by the word of God, not the infusion of new life through the Holy Spirit. Grace does not give us anything that we do not already have within our own power. If, of our own power, we make the proper decision. Now I'm sure that you've heard me and many others and you've read it for yourself, you've heard me cite Romans chapter 8, verses 7 and 8, where the apostle says, “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be.” In other words, men as they are born and as they live their lives apart from the grace of God, they cannot respond to divine truth. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they're foolishness to him. Neither can he know them, for they are discerned by the Spirit.”

You recognize, those of you who are in Believers Chapel, you recognize that I'm talking about Arminianism, but this is the other branch of professing Christianity. Arminius himself says, “It always remaineth in the power of free will to reject grace that is given and to refuse that which followeth, for grace is no almighty action of God to which free will cannot resist.” Now of course, we do not mean that when we talk about irresistible grace, we do not mean that grace overwhelms us against our wills and forces us into the Kingdom of God. That is not what we are talking about and that is not what we mean when we speak of the term irresistible grace. Let's just speak of effectual grace. And what is meant by that is simply that God in his marvelous grace does change the hearts of men. Now there is another – I guess I should also mention this, in this particular viewpoint of Christianity, there is the contention made that if we do not allow our free wills to make the ultimate decision, then we take away the praise that is due to that free will.

I have one or two statements here and in the line of that I think maybe I can find them, in which it is stated that if we do insist that God begins the work of salvation in us

then there is no opportunity to praise our free will. Here is one of the statements, “Why all these proceedeth merely from the strength of his own free will, yielding obedience to God’s gracious invitation, which like the other he might have rejected, this is the immediate cause of his conversion to which all the praise thereof is due. For to speak of effectual grace would destroy the liberty of the will and deprive him of all the praise of believing. In other words, what we are saying is that individuals who contend that it is the free will that make makes the fundamental decision are, in effect, praising free will. It’s free will that they praise, which they want to praise. No wonder John Owens and others call this, “That old idol, free will,” because it is the object of the praise of those who place the free will at the heart of Christianity.

Now you know, also, that another approach to Christian truth is found and it is called the doctrine of sovereign grace. That is, that God sovereignly works in the hearts of men. We turn back to this passage in Ezekiel and I’d like for you to notice a few things. I won’t read all the verses, we don’t have time to do it, but in Ezekiel 36, from verse 22 to verse 31, in describing the things that God is going to do for the nation Israel, you will notice that the prophet speaking the words of God uses, I think, at least fifteen times the expression, “I will.” This is God saying, “It’s not for your sake, oh house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.” Verse 23, “I will vindicate the holiness of my great name; then the nations will know that I am the Lord when I prove myself holy among you in their sight.” Verse 24, “For I will take you from the nations.” Verse 25, “I will sprinkle clean water on you.” Verse 26, “I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes.” Verse 28, “You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers. You will be my people. I will be your God.” And so on, still more. Notice the sovereign activity of the Lord God.

Grace prepares the will to respond to the word of God. The work begins with the Lord God. As the apostle writes in Philippians chapter 1, in verse 6, that God begins the work and will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. Jeremiah in the Lamentations, a book we don't often cite from, do we, in verse 21 of the 5th chapter, says, “Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.” “Turn Thou us unto Thee,” it's not that we turn ourselves to Thee, “Turn Thou us unto Thee. Renew spirit.”

The will's first act is an act that is moved by the grace of God and the power of God in the heart. When the will responds, and the will does respond, it responds because God moves the will. I've so often said the words that Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse said, that if our wills respond to the truth of God it's because God has already jiggled our willer [Laughter]. How true that is. He has jiggled our willer, this activity of God, the Holy Spirit, is an activity that infallibly produces its effect. As Peter says, “Who can withstand God?” And the will responds, “Because God mollifies the will and makes it responsive to the truth that is proclaimed.”

Special grace is external in the word, we make great use of the persuasiveness of the word of God, but the internal grace that brings response is the Spirit's infused vital principle, it creates a new heart. And the new heart has a new habit of faith, new inclinations of the will, and the new affections of the heart. As Jeremiah in chapter 32 put it, God speaking, God's words, “I will put the fear of me in your hearts.”

Now think about it for just a moment, as you look at this text in verse 26 where Ezekiel writes, giving the words of God, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh.” Let me ask you this question, is it within the power of a stony heart to remove itself of its stone, if it's a stony heart? Is the stone so lively that it might remove the stones of its heart? If it's a stony heart, it cannot respond. That's the whole point. So to insist that it is in the power of a stony heart to remove itself – John Owen used to say, “What an

active stone is this, in mounting towards heaven?” If it’s a stony heart it cannot respond, that’s the whole point. So God must work. And he says, “I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh.” This is the work of God.

When Paul preached the gospel in Philippi, Lydia was there. And as she heard the apostle speaking the things from the word of God, the Scriptures say, “And her heart was turned was turned toward the Lord.” The response was something that God did. The Scriptures specifically say God opened the heart of Lydia so that she responded. The stony heart of Lydia became a heart of flesh and it was because God opened that heart. This is in essence the difference between the concept of Christian salvation which begins with man and God only responsive, waiting for man to make the first move, and the concept of a sovereign God who, in effectual grace, turns the heart of men, mollifies its negative reactions to the truth of God, so moves in the heart through the allurements of the Holy Spirit that the heart responds to the word that is given.

Well there is one last text in 1 Timothy chapter 1, in verse 5, that we read in our Scripture reading, but the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith. This is the practical aim of God’s gracious provision; the deep fountainhead of all outgoings of Christian love is a purified heart. Blessed are the pure in heart. One who has the pure heart has a conscience orientated by the Spirit, a sincere faith and a love for God and man.

That brings me back again to Allen Gardiner. Allen Gardiner, after he was converted, with all of his training in the British Navy, determined that he would use his training in the work of the Lord. And so he gave himself to what he spoke of as a pioneer of a missionary. We think of missionaries as pioneers but he said he wanted to be a pioneer for the missionaries. He wanted to be one who would be a harbinger and a pathfinder among the most barbarous and degraded races of mankind in order that he missionaries may come and preach the word of God to them and so as a Christian he consecrated his nautical skill to this sublime end. He penetrated earth’s darkest

continents. He went to Africa, to South America, in order to open up a way for the cross of Christ. He distinguished himself in various parts of the country and of this particular globe. In Africa he went into the interior, dared a thousand deaths, someone has said, among the Hottentots, the Kafers, the Zulus, the bushmen. At different stages of his adventurous career he was at Tahiti, he was at Borneo, he was at Pathuwa. At the most outlandish places.

He then eventually went to the Falkland Islands and we know from the recent Falkland's war what a desolate place that is, but there to reach a few people. And when he was on the Falkland's he looked across toward the Southern part of South America and he thought about the storm swept coasts of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. The Falkland Islands are dreary enough, but the Falkland Islands are a paradise compared with that desolate Fuegian end of the Western world toward which Allen Gardiner now turned to face. He and seven men made the trip across, in terrible weather, and incidentally Fuegians were a most degraded people at the time. Very, very inhospitable to strangers but nevertheless he went. They made it across, made it to the land, but then the men died in one of the remarkable animals of missionary adventure. There were seven of the men, their ship was disabled, their powder was wet, their nets were torn to tatters by the floating ice, their stores became exhausted. John Babcock is the first to die of the seven. He begs his companions to sing as his spirit passes into the presence of the Lord. One by one the others close their eyes and yield their spirits back to God, until two only were left. Maidmant and Gardiner. And for a few days the captain was able to hobble back and forth on a pair of roughly fashioned crutches to the cavern in which Maidmant lies, he himself is occupying an open boat on the beach, nobody will ever know which of the two died first. The relief expedition found the two unburied bodies. Maidmant in the cavern, Gardiner's beside the boat. He was evidently too weak to get back into the boat. And on the rocks, anxious that his friend should be found, he had painted a hand pointing to the cavern and he had put underneath the hand the words from Psalm 62,

verse 5 through verse 8, “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. Trust in him at all times, ye people pour out your heart before God, God is a refuge for us.”

One of the nicest things about this martyrdom, which is really what it was for the sake of Christ, was the fact that he had written an account of many of the things that had happened to him, and though the tide had flowed over what he had written the words were still clear enough for individuals to read. And so again and again he would break into portrait when he was writing his memoirs. “Although my daily bread has failed, I know from whence it came and still his faithful promises are everyday the same. His words the same forever more as when they first were given. Ye blessed thought they cannot fail, though earth dissolve in heaven.” And on the day that precedes his death, he assures us that though four days without food he has no sensation of hunger. Reminds you of the children of Israel who wandered back and forth in the desert and their shoes were as they were when they went in.

And this is the last sentence that he ever penned. “Yet a little while, and through grace, we shall joined that blessed throng to sing the praises of Christ throughout eternity. I neither hunger nor thirst, though five days without food. Marvelous kindness to me, a sinner.” That’s a new heart. That’s a cleansed heart. That’s an individual who acknowledges that the cleansed heart has come from the grace of God, manifested to him, and as Paul tells Timothy the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, sincere faith, and a love for God and a love for man as well.

Well the fast approaching new year, 1990, I hope I make it. I never thought I would make 1990. The last decade before a new millennium, Deo volente, God willing, calls for fresh commitment and new dedication by believers to confession, to communion, and to service, even the nursery [Laughter]. In a word, let us as a congregation and as individuals cry out with David, “Create, O Lord, within me a clean heart.” That he promises to give. For those of us up to now unbelieving it’s the same cry, it’s only a

slight modification. You want to cry for a new heart, recognizing that there can be no such heart without conversion. It's the look of faith to the savior on the cross, offering the atoning satisfaction of his shed blood that brings eternal life.

If you're here today and you've never believed in our Lord, we invite you as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, to look off to the savior dying upon the cross for sinners, that's what we all are and that's what you are. Give thanks to him for what he has done for sinners. And for those of us who know him who want a clean heart, may God in his marvelous grace help us to understand his grace and to know that he freely gives this. And may our desire from deep within, like Commander Gardiner's, be to make our lives really count for him. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are very touched as we think of the response of this man of God. A wicked sinner for twenty-five years, but for the remainder of his life, a model of a man who has received the grace of God, touched his will, mollified it, caused it to respond to the grace of the gospel, and made him truly a man with a new heart, a clean heart. We thank Thee Lord, that Thou didst give him a remarkable life of service. And we rejoice that he rejoices with Thee in this day. Rejoices with his mother and his father and with that lovely old lady who wrote him that touching, significant letter. Father, if there should be someone in this audience who has not believed in our Lord Jesus Christ..

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]