



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various

“The Deficiencies of the Disciples’ Faith”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Returning to Luke chapter 8, and verse 22 through verse 25, for our Scripture reading today. Some of you who have been in the chapel a long time will perhaps remember that I have spoken on this passage. And some of you who have been in the chapel a long time will also remember that in this passage, or at least in other passages, the comment has been made that each of the gospel writers presents this incident as part of their gospels. And I must confess to you that I preached on the Markan account and the Matthean account, as well as this Lukean account so it’s something of a favorite of mine and so filled with truth that this morning I went at least six minutes over time. I’m going to try to do better today. It is such a marvelous passage, let me read it again, and later on we’ll have the exposition after another hymn and prayer.

Luke writes in verse 22, of chapter 8,

“Now it happened on a certain day, that he got into a boat with his disciples: and he said to them, Let us cross over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched out, (and evidently he was moving from Capernaum over to the Eastern side of the Sea of Galilee.) But as they sailed he fell asleep: and a windstorm came down on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, (I

mentioned to the meeting this morning at 8:30 that my text has awoken, but when I look at this word I want to say, ‘Awakened him.’ It just seems a little classier form of the verb. And when I finished, one of the men in the preceding 8:30 hour who is a professor of history walked up to me and said he had run across recently in an older article or book that he was reading that there is also an old English form of ‘just wokened’. That sounds less classy. So I will be saying, ‘They awakened him.’) And they came to him and awakened him saying, Master, master, we perishing. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. (And Mark adds an adjective, the adjective ‘great’, ‘There was a great calm.’) But he said to them, Where is your faith? And they were afraid and marveled, saying one to another, Who can this be! For he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”

In Matthew he also speaks to them and says, “Oh you of little faith,” and that’s one of the points that we want to make this morning as we study The Deficiencies of the Disciple’s Faith. May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the gospel writers who have so marvelously told the story of the ministry of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. And we thank Thee Lord for the sovereign providence that has preserved the Scriptures and made them available to us so many centuries later. What a treasure is the word of God and what a treasure to be able to have it in our hands and to read and ponder. And by Thy grace, to be placed by the Spirit in the company of our Lord Jesus as we read the word of God.

We thank Thee for these great incidents which are so revealing of the greatness of him who loved us and gave himself for us. We thank Thee for this beautiful day that Thou hast given to us and we thank Thee for other blessings of life which are showered upon us so marvelously. We thank Thee for the church of Jesus Christ, for each

individual member. And we thank Thee for some who, last week in our Daily Vacation Bible School, made profession of faith in him.

And Father, we are grateful for the assurance that the Holy Spirit resides in the heart of the believers as our Lord’s representative and continues to guide us in the truth. May today he continue his ministry in our hearts as we ponder and meditate upon the word of God. We pray for the United States of America. We ask Thy blessing upon all of the citizens. And we pray for the great country of Canada to the North of us, and we pray for them as well. And for the great country South of us, we pray for the government of Mexico and the people who are there and for others as well.

We thank Thee for the confidence of the word of God that those who lead us politically are ministers of God in that sense. We especially pray for the sick, for the discouraged, for those who need consolation and comfort, we pray for them. We thank Thee for the manifold blessings of our great God in heaven that have poured out upon us. Help us to recognize them. We so often fail to realize all that Thou art doing for us constantly, young and old. We pray Thy blessing upon this church and its leadership. We ask that Thou wilt guide and direct us, enable us to have the kind of ministry that will glorify Thy name and exalt our Lord Jesus Christ and be the means of the conversion of sinners and the strengthening of the saints.

We pray Thy blessing upon us as we meet in this meeting and in the meeting this evening. Now Lord, we thank Thee and praise Thee that by Thy grace Thou hast established the body of Christ. Bless each member, bless our meeting, bless Thou as we sing together. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

[Message] When Mark writes this incident in chapter 4 of his gospel, he has - he said to them, “Why are you such cowards, have you no faith, even now?” According to the New English Bible translation of the text. It’s true to the text in this sense, that the term that is used for fearful is a term that does not have a good sense, so far as I

remember, ever in the New Testament. It is the term for fear, which is a cowardly fear. And so I’d like to begin by asking the question, who is this man who calls men cowards because they are afraid of the storm. Who is he who speaks words to raving lunatics in other passages, to terrified fathers, and hopeless cripples, leaving them a peace that passes all understanding?

Some answer, “Well is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?” And fail to reach the kind of understanding of our Lord that is a true and full understanding of him. Others say, “Thou art the Christ,” as Peter did, the Son of the living God. Some call him a gluttonous man and a winebibber. Still others worship with, “He’s my Lord, and my God,” as Thomas did. Down through the centuries it’s remarkable the things that man have hit upon to think and describe the ministry of the Lord Jesus.

In our Lord’s day they said, “Where or whence comes the wisdom of this individual?” Another one said, “I’m not worthy that he should come under my roof.” Others said, “Lord, remember when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.” And still others as Peter expressed two opinions of him in the accounts of the gospel. Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” but at the same time, earlier in his ministry or in his life, he said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Oh Lord.”

Literally down through the centuries, thousands of so-called reconstructions of the life of Jesus have been written. In fact, one author speaking of lives of Jesus and apparently referring just to the 19th Century, contended that there were as many as 60,000 lives of Christ written in the 19th Century. And most of them have gone to what someone has called the cemetery of departed hypothesis. The question, “Who is Jesus Christ?” is a question that is always interesting, always interesting for believers to think about and meditate upon, reflect upon, and obviously it’s been very important for others to think about as well.

This incident, in my opinion, decisively answers that ancient question. In phrases that many might consider the tired blood of ecclesiastical jargon, it shouts that the man

who sleeps from fatigue is also, to put it in the words of one of the creeds, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made. And I think if you will reflect upon this incident and realize how remarkable it is and it's not more remarkable than other passages in the great book that we call the word of God, you will come to that conviction too.

But really, I'm not primarily interested in stressing that, though I will a bit. The thing that impresses me about this incident as I think about it again, is it raises the questions, not of the unbelieving world but questions that have arisen in the lives of the believing world. In the tempests and tensions of life, and we all have them, where is your faith? This incident, it seems to me, provides a beautiful anchor among many others for believing individuals. Now if you will just think about the person who emerges from this incident, I assure you that that will be most comforting and consoling for you in whatever experience you may find yourself in.

Now the situation of the story is described by Luke in verse 22. He said it happened on a certain day, that he got into a boat with his disciples and he said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side of the lake and they launched out.” This is the Sea of Galilee, the Lake of Genneseret. The rabbis call the Sea of Galilee God's chosen sea. It's a beautiful sea, if you've seen it. Thirteen miles long, seven miles wide, shaped as an oval, but around it the brown fields of the hills and to the East the hills rise to heights of two thousand feet. The water, a beautiful green. It's been described as a sapphire set in gold. If you think about the New Testament gospels and think about the incidents that take place around the Sea of Galilee you can see how important it is. In fact, if you took out of the gospels all of the incidents that take place near or on the Sea of Galilee, you would have a truncated series of four gospels. And evidently from the standpoint of the providence of God, this is a rather important lake.

Our Lord has had a full day of ministry. The preceding context shows he and the disciples get in their little boat and he is tired, he's exhausted from the full day of

preaching, and goes immediately into the stern of the boat and there, perhaps, for some sail cloth or shipping cloth. He finds a place where he can lie down. One of the gospels suggests that he takes the pillow which ordinarily the pilot would be sitting on, and I suggest that one of the disciples probably suggested that. They took the pillow off of the back seat and put it on the material and arranged the place for our Lord to lie down and fall to sleep.

Exhausted, he must have fallen to sleep quickly, Peter and the others in the boat, I don't know that Peter was there, I just have this deep down conviction that he was there, and I believe that John was there. And I think John was probably sitting right next to our Lord, a disciple whom Jesus loved. And as they get ready to go, Peter is out of the boat to push out so they can launch, and he does, and then jumps into the boat and they're out on the sea. It's night time and it's calm at the beginning. But one of the characteristic things about the Sea of Galilee is that it's arranged in such a way that the cool winds that come from the West frequently cause turbulence, and particularly to the North in some of the ravines to the North, it's not uncommon at all, even today, for storms to quickly come down from there, strike the lake, and turn it into something like a boiling cauldron, except not hot. And so that evidently is what happened as our Lord fell asleep, the storm came, and immediately became a very fearful storm.

So that's the context and now I'd like to look for a few moments at the creation itself, because it's helpful in thinking of it. And then we'll look at the creator, our Lord, who's asleep on the pillow, and then the creatures of whom are you and I also. Now notice for the description that is given in verse 23, “As they sailed he fell asleep: and a windstorm came down on the lake.” The term that is used is a term that does suggest thunderclouds, furious gusts, floods of rain, but its very striking that in one of the other accounts the term “seismos” is used and since we are so much into earthquakes these days you know, everyone of you, about seismology, and seismographs, and the term suggests something more than just simply a kind of storm with just wind and rain. What

is suggested is a storm that is so strong that it's shaking everything like an earthquake and so it's that kind of shaking that takes place. I can imagine the conversations that had been taking place between Andrew and Peter. Andrew may have said, “It looks like we might have a blow,” when things began to come down from the North, and Peter said, “Yes, it certainly does, perhaps we better shorten sail.” But before they can even do that, there comes a blast of wind that sweeps the sail off into the water and it's a furious storm and the waves are beating against the ship and the water is coming over their little boat.

I think what is interesting to me is that these individuals were seasoned navigators. Now you can understand how someone like me might have been afraid, but these men had spent their lives on this sea. But it was such a fierce storm that even they were afraid and our Lord calls it a kind of cowardly fear. So it was, indeed, a tremendous storm.

Now looking at the creator, we read in verse 23, he was asleep. You know, this is the only time in the gospels that we read that our Lord fell asleep. I do think he slept at other times, don't you? But this is the only time that it is stated that he fell asleep or that he was asleep. So it's something for us to ponder and the immediate response that I have to this is that here is something that makes the point that he's one of us. And as he enters the boat, exhausted, tired, lies down upon the little pallet that they had made, puts his head on the pillow, and immediately falls asleep. I see an evidence of the perfect man. The storm comes and even in the midst of the fierceness of the storm and their fear, he's still sleeping. The lightning, the thunder, like a lullaby to the man who is also Son of God. So true man, but also the one who is the divine person. Truly man, sleeping but at the same time sleeping quietly and calmly in the midst of that that terrifies the rest of us.

Now we read of the men, the creatures, and when the windstorm comes and they saw that the water was coming over the sides of their little boat and filling it with water and that they were in danger, they came to him and awakened him, not awoke him, awakened him -- my text has awoke -- wakened him. Now for those of you who lived in the 4th or 5th Century, they wokened him. But they awakened him. Experience

fisherman, amid the confusion, they awakened him and they say, “Master, master, we are perishing.”

You know, you look at the other accounts and you’ll find that the words are different. In one of the other accounts they say, “*Didaskale*, (teacher) we are perishing.” In another of the accounts it is, “Lord, we are perishing.” And here it is, “Master, master, we are perishing.” *Didaskale, Kurie, Epistata*; these are the terms that are used. Now one might think that with these three different terms used that we have here, a nice illustration of the fact that we are not to look at the Bible and to take its words seriously but to think only about its thoughts. And let me hasten to say, I have a lot of friends who are so anxious to defend inerrancy of Scripture that they do not pay sufficient attention to the thoughts of Scripture. In other words, the ultimate Scripture is not only the words, the ultimate Scripture is the thought of the words.

But now, when I look at this I think that I see that this is precisely what you might expect. The boat is filled with the disciples, in fact one of the gospels tells us that there was a little flotilla of boats that were following them and they were in the storm too, although nothing is said about them. They were just following other boats. We don’t know whether they survived or not but I have a good feeling that they did survive. But you can see in the fact that these individuals rush to our Lord and called out these words, a beautiful illustration of the truthfulness of the word of God, because I’m sure that’s exactly what happened. That one said, “Lord,” one said, “Master, master,” and another one said, “Teacher.” They all said that and it’s so true to life for them to speak in this confusion, different words.

In fact, the fact that they are different is more of an evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures than if they’d all said the same thing, or at least if the writers had said they all said the same thing. But now, listen, in the midst of a storm if you are an experienced navigator would you go to a carpenter for help? Isn’t that interesting? These men go to the carpenter for help. But this is no ordinary carpenter and so consequently, though a

carpenter, knowing him, they know the one to whom they are to go. And so they come to him and say, “Teacher, Lord, Master, master,” they forget human ability for divine ability. And in the trials and stresses of life, let us always, as believing individuals, remember that fact. When the trials come we are grateful indeed that our Lord was truly man. But we are so thankful that he is also truly God, the God-man, and therefore the ability of the infinite Son of God, under girds, all of his activities and is at our disposal as we come to him and look to him to help us out.

Harold Sengen, a Bible teacher, British Bible teacher, once said with reference to this incident that there were really two storms that night on the Sea of Galilee. One was on the surface of the waters and the other was in the hearts of the disciples. I understand what he was saying and I think that was really true. And the storm in the midst of those apostles, in disciples, is enough to cause them to come to our Lord. But notice the deficiencies in their faith. “Carest Thou not that we perish?” Incidentally, that’s stated in all three of the accounts, we’re perishing. They agreed on that. And that is what they felt. They felt that after all that we have been through, all of the persecutions, all of the problems that we’ve had, and the convictions that we’ve had, that God is with this movement, now it appears as if the whole thing would come to an end in the midst of a storm on the Sea of Galilee. We are perishing. It’s a kind of, some one has said, a rude vote of no confidence in our Lord in this moment of despair. Look, a storm with our Lord is better than a calm without him. And they learned that, it’s something that you and I have to learn too. And learn to carry out in the experiences of life. Notice also the way they center attention upon themselves, “Carest Thou not that we perish?” Self-centered fear, we will fail.

Now the stilling of the storm is described and we read in verse 24, “And they came to him.” That underlines the basic faith, the basic faith. They didn’t shout out for someone who might be the ancestor of the present pope, they didn’t shout out for any of the Pharisees or the Sadducees, those fellows who weren’t giving anything other than the

mumblings and jumbings of the past. But they went right to him because he was their hope. And I think it’s so beautifully described. They came to him. And I gather that that means that fundamentally their trust was in him. Little faith, but clearly faith, in coming to him.

You know, we have the feeling often in evangelical circles that we have to have strong faith before we are to be accounted among the faithful. No, no, a fundamental fact is a commitment, a trust in our Lord as our atoning savior. The growth that follows will vary with all of us but fundamentally it’s that faith in him as our atoning savior that’s the ground of our salvation. Often people insist on a kind of life that requires a great deal of time in the Christian life to develop. We all know that there must be evidence of new life. It must not be necessarily in my sight but there must be that evidence of a transformed life and heart. God sees things, of course, that we cannot see and a true conversion will always inevitably produce fruit. But the Christian life is a lengthy life. We may be converted in a moment and live fifty years in growth in grace. That should be kept in our minds because we don’t expect an individual, of course we’re happy when this happens, but we don’t expect an individual to be converted and immediately to be a light and an example of a mature believing individual. But they came to him, an evidence of their basic trust in him.

And we read in verse 24, “Then he arose.” Isn’t that interesting? He did not apparently hear the storm but he heard their cry. I can remember in one place I lived and there was a train that went right by our house. Right here in Dallas, the Cotton Belt. And when our children were just a few years of age, six, seven, and three or four, that train would come by and we got so that we never even heard that train, though it shook our little house on Caruth. But I noticed that whenever one of the children turned over in their bed down the hall in something out of the ordinary my wife would awaken immediately and occasionally go down the hall to see that everything was all right. So that the train coming by made no difference but the turning over or unusual sound of a

child to a mother makes a big difference. And so with our Lord, he didn’t hear the storms, the lightning, the thunder, it didn’t make any difference to him. But when they come to him we read, “Then he arose. Now I think if I were an artist, and I’m not an artist, and there is no chance I would ever be an artist, in fact I’ve never wanted to be an artist, I’ve never cared to be an artist, and I lived for a long period of time with a lady, a lovely lady, who loved art museums. And I want you to know, I’ve seen the art museums of Western Europe. And I’ve looked at those pictures and often wondered, what’s great about this? [Laughter] There are two or three that have impressed me but that’s about the extent of my knowledge and love of art. I know some of you will think the less of me for it but truth is important.

If I were an artist, however, I think I would love to catch the picture, our Lord in that boat amidst the storm and then he arose. In fact I do know that that has been caught but I cannot remember who has painted the picture. Perhaps many have tried to do it. But at any rate, “Then he arose. And he rebuked the wind and the raging of the water.” The original text, as you put these things together, the word rebuke is the word and some have thought that they saw in this an evidence of satanic power permitted by the Father in heaven, as in the case of Job, and thus the term “rebuke” which was used often of our Lord’s words with regard to the evil spirits or the demons, that there is that in this account to be reckoned. But it’s not mentioned in any of the accounts and so we’ll just leave it. It was a rebuke and what he said to them was, “Hush,” or, “Be silent, hush,” and then, “Be muzzled.” And the term “phimoo” which means “to muzzle” in Greek is a term that was used naturally of a dog. That’s what you do, you muzzle dogs. And the man who led me to the Lord loved to refer to this passage and he said, in making that point, he said that this is K-9 metaphor. And so he suggested that what he really said was, “Hush, back to your kennels.” And the tense of the verb is such that suggests that he is saying, “Hush, be muzzled and stay muzzled.” So it’s the word of an authoritative Lord. And back to your kennels and stay there, and the result is, whatever the precise sense that our Lord

intended, the result is that the wind folded its wings and the sea closed its jaws and there was a calm, a great calm.

Now I grew up in Charleston, I’ve mentioned this before, I grew up in Charleston by the side of the Atlantic and I’ve been in a few storms. Not like Hugo recently, my sisters and brother have said that’s the worst of all. But I’ve been there when there was storms and I learned just a little simple fact about storms. And that is, the waters churn and then when calmness comes the waters continue to churn for a good while after the sun is out. The wind has died down, the waters are still moving back and forth, but I notice here we read, “He spoke and said, Be muzzled, and there was a great calm.” Now this is not the kind of calm that comes naturally. This is one that comes supernaturally. And in fact, in one sense you might even say there were two miracles. That is, the storm was stopped by our Lord and the kinds of evidence that you normally have is not found. So there was a great calm.

Now we read - well I should say this, of course, what that illustrates very simply is that he is not at the mercy of nature. Even sleeping in the boat in the midst of this storm but nature is at his mercy. And if we see him sleeping in the boat and we can say he’s truly a man such as you and I are -- I’m using the term “man” generically, ladies, you are men too, in that sense -- here is something quite different. And anyone who can calm the elements is the one who has authority over them who is responsible for them and has created them. And so he’s truly God.

You know what Christ’s deity is in one sense? Christ’s deity that we believe he is very God, a very God is the theological expression of the evangelical experience of salvation. If we have come to know salvation we know only God can save sinners. Only God can save a sinner like you. And if he has saved you, you know he possesses infinite deity. So he calms the sea and it raises also some interesting questions. We have a few moments. If you look back at the history of what the church has thought about Jesus Christ, it’s passed through stages of immaturity, a falsehood and immaturity on to a mature

face. To really think that it took so many centuries for the church to come to conviction as a total church of who Jesus Christ is, is in itself an interesting thing.

The Ebionites and later the Socinians thought of our Lord as a saintly individual, a person possessed of moral supereminence, we might say. And that’s true enough in one sense but if you think of that as the final evaluation of our Lord then of course, it’s untrue. They thought he was our religious hero, a genius, religious genius unsurpassed. The grand and perfect receptacle of the Spirit, as someone has put it. But our Lord is far more than that. The Arians came along and their view as better and higher. They thought of him as a kind of superman, God’s plenipotentiary, someone has put it. His superhuman chancellor, the most private secretary of his eternal praise but yet, nit one with God in the sense of possessing true deity. In other words, he’s not of the same nature as God, of the same essence as God, but of a like essence of God. The difference between homoousias and homoiouias is actually one little letter in the Greek language. And that one little letter spells the difference between truth and error. Just as the Ephraimites, when the tribe of Manasseh had them cornered later on -- incidentally they were brothers originally -- had them cornered later on and Ephraimites tried to escape as if they were of the tribe of Manasseh they just simply said, “Say, shibboleth.” And they couldn’t say shibboleth. They said sibboleth and when they did they were cut down. Just the difference between “sh” and “ss” is enough to mean death. And the difference of the order is the difference between a true view of our Lord and a heretical view of our Lord. He is the eternal Son.

They would like to call him Son of God, but not the eternal Son. Just like down here South of us about a block down there, there are a group of people and they meet all over this country and if you talk to the Mormons they will tell you, “Yes we believe that Jesus is the Son of God.” But what they mean by the “Son of God” is less than what Scripture means about him. In other words, he’s not very God, a very God, and God is not a Trinitarian God -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- one God who subsists in three persons.

So you look at this account and I’m sure you can see that those other views of our Lord do not match this account. And that’s why Athanasius, I’m so thankful, he ultimately, his views ultimately, won out for the Christian church and we believe that God did not, as someone has said, announce himself in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, he did not simply manifest his character in our Lord’s life, but he actually came himself in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you realize that if our Lord was not truly God we would have no certainty whatsoever that we have a message from God. Do you not see that? That’s why the incarnation and the deity of Christ are so significant and important for the Christian faith. We have no assurance that God has actually spoken to us if the Lord Jesus is not truly God. It’s he who authenticated the Old Testament and it’s he who speaks and speaks as God. Affirming us of the truth of the word of God. Without we are all men most miserable if we think. So I look at this and I say, he’s truly man, he sleeps just as I sleep but he is something more than I; he is truly God.

I think also we have in this some evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures in the sense that the apostles record all of this panic and they record it as being of their own panic. You would never hear our religious leaders today talking about their panic. As a general rule they talk about how in their own sweet, swath way, of how great they are and how you ought not to panic. But here they are, putting out faithfully their own panic. The Scriptures just give us life as it is.

Now the sepal to the storm is stated in verse 25, “But he said to them, Where is your faith?” “Or is it that you are so fearful (other places record), and they were afraid and marveled saying to one another, Who can this be, for he commands even the winds and the water and they obey him.” I guess this is the real purpose of this story, to lead them on from simply going to them but to go to him and to learn who he is. “Where is your faith?” Rebuke for their frantic panic. And they learn that the cure for fear is faith and faith, of course, comes from the word of God, does it not. You wonder why it is in

the experiences of life that you and I often have so much difficulty in coping with our experiences. We recognize our faith as so flimsy, so failing, well Scripture tells us, “Faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the word of God.” If we are not spending time with our Lord - and do you realize that you can spend time with our Lord just as those disciples did in that boat. If you will get your Bible out and just simply place yourself among them and read the accounts of Scripture and put yourself on their too -- Peter, Andrew, James, John, Nathaniel and Lewis [Laughter]. See, that’s the way you read it. And you’re there and put yourself there and your faith will grow. That’s what the apostle tells us. “Faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the word of God.”

Well let me just mention three principles as we close. There are three of them here, I think. And the principle of the trial of faith is obvious. James said, “Brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers testings, so count it all joy when you fall in these testings.” God permits the winds to blow but he’s with them too. He doesn’t say, “I let the wind blow and I’ll pass as far as helping you in the midst of it.” The worst blows are the blows in which he finds himself. Our Lord may appear unconcerned, sleeping away, but he’s not unconcerned, that’s evident.

The cross is the ultimate test of that. If you have any doubt about whether God cares, just look at Calvary and that settles all such questions. God cares. He may put you to a little bit of test. Well, that’s in order that your faith may grow and that your faith may grow and that you may learn more and more about yourself and more and more about him, and the result may be the glorification of the Lord God. There’s a marvelous little quote that I’ve used from time to time. When life is a picket - that’s funny. This morning at 8:30 I said the same thing, when life is a picket. [Laughter] “When life is a picnic [Laughter] we play with theology. When life is a campaign, we grope for religion,” Mr. Jowett has said and that’s true. When life is going along nicely we talk about theology but when the trials come then we’re interested in the experience of the truth that we’ve talked so much about.

There is the principle of the nature of faith. It's not feeling, it's not automatically exercised either. Faith doesn't act automatically like a thermostat does and your heat or air-conditioning coming off as the temperature rises or falls. But it's an active trust and it has degrees. Faith, little faith, great faith, all expressions of the word of God. So faith is not feeling, it's trust and it's not automatically exercised. It comes through the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us who gives us faith first and we are converted. And then the ministry of the Spirit as we live our lives, increasing our faith, and let me give you some good news: the time is coming when you are going to have great faith and you're going to be like the Lord. Because the apostles and others tell us that this life of ours is going to end in likeness to him. So we may stumble and fall, we may never realize a high level of Christian life down here, but if we are genuine believers we're going to ultimately be like Christ, having missed a great deal of the blessing down here. But we won't miss that blessing. Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work and you will perform it until the day of Christ.

And then let's not forget the principle of the value of the weakest kind of faith, “They came to him.” How disappointed in them, he delivers a rebuke to them, greater rest in him leads to greater joy. But they did come to him. I am so thankful for that. So amid the storms of life, the guilt, the anxiety, the doubts, the temptation, the anger, the sorrow, come to our Lord and savior Jesus Christ and let his blood and his presence lay those difficulties, find in him what you need.

This week when I was in, this past week, when I was in Grand Rapids I went down to Kregle's Book Store, and I really was actually looking for the books of one particular man, I'd like to have a good number of them. I always enjoy reading them. They're just devotional chapters. And one of the chapters was about Charles Wesley, one of the books that I read, and there is a story about Mr. Wesley that may be true or it may not be true. No one knows, modern men like to say there's some doubt about it and

perhaps they’re right. But nevertheless, the story is this, and there are some who will not give it up, insisting that so far as they know it’s true, it’s not been proven to be untrue.

Charles Wesley, as you know, is maybe the greatest of our hymn writers. He wrote over six thousand hymns, think of that. And just as John Wesley preached and brought the knowledge of the Lord God and the grace of God to England in troubled times, so Charles Wesley taught them to sing. And one day he was himself in difficulties, so the story goes, and he was sitting by a window that was open. And he looked out the window and he saw a hawk seeking to catch a sparrow and kill it. And the sparrow was flying about, the hawk persistently following, and the sparrow appeared to be getting more and more tired and the inevitable end seemed to be just about there. And Mr. Wesley was looking at and suddenly the sparrow flew right through the window and into the folds of his coat. And according to the story he took up his pen and he wrote one of our marvelous hymns, “Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly, while the nearer roll, while the tempest still is high. Hide me, oh my Savior, hide, till the storm of life be passed. Safe into the haven, God, oh receive my soul at last.” To me, that’s one of the great lessons of this particular chapter. And I do hope that by God’s grace we all may learn the lesson.

If you are here today and you’ve never believed in Christ, we remind you that there’s no real hope outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so in your experiences you flee to him. If you don’t know him as your savior, Christ died for sinners. That’s what you are. His salvation is offered to all and it’s a genuinely free offer to you. And may God in his grace touch your heart. If you don’t know him, acknowledge your condition to him, come to him as they came to our Lord. Trust in him as the one who’s died for sinners and for you since you believe in him. And rest in him from that time on. May God in his grace accomplish that for you.

For those of you who are already believers, well may, as we have just been talking about, in the experiences of life remember, he remembers, he’s concerned, and you can come to him and deliverance is found with him. Let’s stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent records that we call the gospels of our Lord Jesus Christ. How marvelous to, by Thy grace, be placed again with those disciples in that boat and to know the experience of the delivering power of Jesus of Nazareth. Oh God, help us in our life today to know the experience of the disciples as we come to him. May in all of our trials, and we all have them, and ultimately we all have a great trial of deal, may we come to him and receive from him that what your loving God in heaven dispenses toward us and for us in Grace. Lord, if there are some here who have never believed in Christ, touch their hearts right at this moment. May they say to Thee, thank Thee Lord...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]