



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

2 Timothy 1:8-11

“The Tonic of Life’s Immensities”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] This morning we are turning to 2 Timothy chapter 1 and reading verse 8 through verse 11 for our Scripture reading. The Apostle Paul you’ll remember was in Roman confinement when he wrote this, the last epistle that he did write. And in the 8th verse to young Timothy or younger Timothy, his apostolic Legate, he says, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.” That text may be rendered that way. There is nothing wrong with the rendering. Greek is often like English, somewhat ambiguous. The context enables us to make decisions regarding the sense with some certainty in most cases. In this instance, instead of, “Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel,” it’s probably better to render it something like, “Join with me in sufferings for the gospel.” In other words, the “with” is to be taken with a “me” understood rather than with the gospel. So we’ll have it that sense,

“Join with me in sufferings for the gospel (and then the final phrase,) according to the power of God. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour

Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

The expression, “of the Gentiles,” is found in the Authorized Version that I just read, it is found in some manuscripts. It’s likely however, that it’s derived from 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 7 where the apostle does mention this particular statement, “teacher of the Gentiles.” But it’s likely here that he simply says, “I’m appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.” But it certainly is true to the sense to say a teacher of the Gentiles because that was Paul’s specific place in the present age. So we’re justified in reading it this way even though the expression, ethnon, or Gentiles is not specifically found probably in 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 11. May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we come to the in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank Thee Lord for these great sections of the apostolic letters that have been preserved for us. We thank Thee for the remarkable way in which the Holy Spirit illuminated the minds of the Apostles and specifically of the Apostle Paul and gave them such magnificent passages that express the purpose and plan of our great gracious God from eternity past. We thank Thee that today in 1991 we’re able to read these expressions from the apostles, to reflect upon them, and then by Thy grace to seek to live in the light of them. We thank Thee for the greatness of the Son of God, the one who Scripture calls the Savior, our Lord and our Master. We thank Thee and praise Thee for the privilege of ministering the word of God in this day, the day of nineteen ninety-one, the day when we are approaching the end of the present millennium.

We ask Lord that as the word of God goes forth today, not only from Believers Chapel, but from other places, that when it goes forth in truth that Thy blessing may be

upon it through the Holy Spirit to enlighten the hearts of men and women and to bring them to Christ, build them up in the faith. Today Lord, in Believers Chapel, we pray for the ministry of the word here. We ask Thy blessing upon the outreach of the Chapel itself. We thank Thee for those who labor so many people labor to make it possible for the word of God to go forth. And we pray also for the ministry of each of us individually as we seek to make our Lord known to our family, to our friends, and to others with whom we come in contact in the daily experience of our lives. Give us Lord, a desire to see others also experience the blessings that have come to be ours in which we rejoice and for which we are thankful.

We pray Thy blessing upon the sick who've requested our prayers especially, we pray for them. We ask Lord that Thou will sustain them and strengthen them and minister to those who minister to them as well. If it should be Thy will in specific cases, give healing. And above all in all of our experiences, may we by Thy grace learn to place ourselves in the hands of a sovereign God whose providence guides and guards all of our steps.

And Father, we ask for our country, the United States of America, cannot help but confess that we see so many signs of spiritual disintegration in our society and we ask Lord that if it should please Thee that this may be stopped. That we may yet see a day in which there is a great turning of hearts to our Lord Jesus Christ, for we surely need it, and surely need it as a nation.

And Lord we pray for our Elders and Deacons, for the members and friends who are here and the visitors who are with us, may this be an experience for all of us that brings spiritual edification to us. Lord we ask for Thy presence in our meeting for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] It really is a marvelous thing to sing a hymn of inspiration and exhortation like that and whoever selected it for this week, I surely commend them. I

wish that we had sung it in the eight-thirty but we did not sing it then, and as far as I'm concerned, we can sing it again very frequently because the expressions of it, the aspirations of the heart are aspirations that I'm sure those of you who are in this audience, who are believing men and women experience and know and love.

The subject for today is “The Tonic of Life's Immensities.” And we're turning to 2 Timothy chapter 1 and the verses we read for the Scripture reading. Immensity is magnificent medicine, so we are told. Friends tell us that when we are under stress, and give us advice with regard to the things that we should do to alleviate the stress. Physicians prescribe it for stress for strain, for the shattering experiences of life, and others for the monotony of life's little things.

I was reading an author a week or two ago in which he commented upon those who had read *Mrs. Barclay's Rosary* and that they will remember that in the crisis of her life, the heroine, the honorable Jane Champion determined to consult her Physician, Sir Deryck Brand, and after having realized the fearful strain to which his poor patient's nerves had been subjected he exclaimed to his patient, “Here is a prescription for you, see the big things, see a few of the big things,” and he urged her to go our west and see the stupendous falls of Niagara and then go east and see the great pyramid. “Go for the big things” he said, “you'll like to remember when you're bothering about pouring water in and out of the teacups, Niagara is flowing still.”

Now, we pour tea into the teacups, or Martha does, or every afternoon, at our house at five-thirty so we can look at the news and have something to brace us for what we're going to see and hear. [Laughter] But I must confess to you, I never have in the midst of the pouring of the teacups said, “Niagara is flowing still,” as a means of giving me some comfort. But perhaps it is true, some are like that.

John Bunyan has a couple of passages in *Grace Abounding* that are very interesting. He's talking about things that I think bear on the tendency of all of us to drift among the small things, small anxieties, the small pleasures, the small ideas and the small

talk. And in his autobiography, *Grace Abounding*, Mr. Bunyan says, and I'm going to quote him,

“While I was thus afflicted with the fears of my own damnation, there were two things would make me wonder. One was when I saw old people hunting after the things of this life as if they should live here always. The other was when I found professors much distressed and cast down when they met with outward losses. Lord, thought I, what ado is here about such little things as these.”

Now if you're an older person in the audience, as I am, to think about the things that we think about in our daily life and forget that we face a future not so far away is surely a great mistake. And for those of us to be upset because our portfolio has suffered some losses because of the recession, is to me again one of the more stupid things that characterize us as human beings. That in the midst of the great immensities of life with which we should be concerned, we talk about such little things as these, Mr. Bunyan says. He also spoke in that same work of another experience that he had. And this experience was an experience that also illustrated the point. He said that when God in his good providence called him to Bedford to do his work there, he was walking one of the streets and that he came to where there was three or four poor women that were sitting at a door in the sun talking about the things of God. He said, “I heard but understood not, for they were far above out of my reach. Their talk was about a new birth, the work of God in their hearts. They talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted and supported. Such little things as these, the worlds occupied with and then the things of God Mr. Bunyan said, “Far out of my reach in my unsaved state.”

Well, I guess the apostles are known for the big things. You talk about Niagara being still flowing, well the truths that the apostles talked about are much bigger than

that. And Paul has many of these passages, and one of the passages that is filled with big things, and a neglected one, is 2 Timothy chapter 1 and specifically verse 9 and 10. In it the apostle in custody in a Roman situation in the city of Rome, whether he was in a cell or not we're not absolutely certain, but he was there, and he was confined and it was not happy. But he was in custody as a common criminal and in custody as a common criminal he calls his young apostolic Legate, Timothy, under strain perhaps, we're not sure of association with him, to loyalty to the cause. That is the cause, the great cause, the cause that is the greatest of all of the causes, the cause of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You know when I read 2 Timothy I cannot help but feel that we have something that is very close to the heart of the Apostle Paul. And having been at least professionally a student of the New Testament for forty years, and serving for thirty years as a professor of New Testament, and having to read the literature concerning the Pastoral Epistles, I confess that I've puzzled a great deal over the literature that I read. Contemporary scholarship as a rule, not all but the majority of it, feels that the epistle did not come from the hands of the Apostle Paul. In fact, the pastoral epistles are generally accredited to others and not to Paul. Not to specific individuals, for no one knows not even they, that, but at least not to Paul.

Now I find this very interesting because as I read their comments, I note one specific thing that occurs in their language. And it is that there are bits and pieces from literature that must have come from Paul. In other words, scattered throughout are certain things that contemporary scholarship cannot explain except as coming from the Apostle Paul, but the final product probably not from the Apostle Paul. Now that's very interesting because, if a person who was a fabricator was truly fabricating, well, I guess if you look at 2 Timothy and examined it's characteristics carefully, you would have to conclude that this is one work that a fabricator could not have written. In fact, a person who forged the second epistle to Timothy, if there was such, must have been and he did

it the name of Saint Paul; he must have been a genius. Nothing has come down for us in the literature concerning the Apostle Paul that leads us to suppose there was any such literary power that existed in the individuals who lived in the second century. We just don't have that kind of literature in the 2nd Century. As a matter of fact, when you read the apostolic fathers, the one thing that you notice as you read the literature, and I've read most of it, the one thing you notice, is the difference between what they wrote and what the apostles wrote. You must come to the conclusion that there was that there was a tremendous drop off in spirituality in the professing church when the apostles passed off the scene. And so, the idea that there would be individuals who wrote this literature under the name of the Apostle Paul, and did such a magnificent job of it is thoroughly unharmonious with what we know of the second century of this Christian era.

We have here things that are so characteristic of Paul, the exquisite sympathy that is reflected in this epistle, his sensitiveness, his affection, his intense anxiety for his young Legate his unflinching courage, these are the things that we expect of the Apostle Paul. We have the solemnity and the importunity of one who knows that his days are numbered, he speaks that way. And we have the urgency and the tenderness of one who writes to his friend who has faults and weaknesses, which he suggests there is a remedy for and at the same time writes to one who is trusted and loved in spite of them. So, in my opinion, it's impossible to make a stronger case for the authorship of 2 Timothy by the Apostle Paul. I say that because there are a lot of people who suggest to us because they've read a few comments by contemporary scholars, that the Pastoral Epistles are not really Pauline literature.

There are reflections of the day. There is a reflection in the language of Hellenistic religious vocabulary of their time. You notice the terms such as, our lord god the savior epiphany. These were terms that were characteristic of that particular time and used usually of political figures. The reason for it, when Augustus came to power after a great deal of turmoil just preceding him there came over the empire a great deal of

stability and peace, and it was natural for men who are only men to give to their leaders who had brought out of disorder such order, these terms such as god our savior, epiphany, the appearance of Augusta and so on and attach them to their political leaders. We know it's foolish, I don't know of any political leader that I've ever had any contact with or ever read about who deserved the title god, or even savior and certainly not when they appeared on the scene to attach to them the term epiphany as if it were a religious experience. But nevertheless, those were true. Now some have suggested that what the apostles did was just naively borrow those terms. That is, they were commonly used, and so they used them. Very much as you and I borrow terms which we hear when we sit in front of a television screen and listen to the language of the day. And the language of individuals reflects the times. So perhaps it was just naive borrowing some have suggested. I would rather incline, though of course I can not prove this, I would rather incline to the fact that the apostles were a bit smarter than that and in fact what they did was use the terms of the day, but try to point out the real application of those terms were not to present political leaders but were rather to our great God in Heaven. One God who subsists in three persons, to whom the term our Lord God is proper, to whom the term, God our Savior or the Savior is proper, and whose appearance in his first coming was an epiphany and will be also in his Second Coming an epiphany.

Now, we're talking about the tonic of the immensities. And one of the great immensities stands out immediately here as the magnificent immensity of the annulment of death, death, the great unmentionable in our society. Usually, if death is mentioned, it's mentioned humorously. For example, who hasn't heard the cliché, “How are you getting along?” “Well, I'm getting along fine when I get up in the morning the first thing I do is to read the obituary and if my name is not there, then I put on my clothes and go about my duties for the day.” What could be sadder than that? To think of death in that way. Death is something you face, you children, you adults, you old people such as I am, we face death, it stares us in the face, it lies in the future. The wages of our sins is

death. And there has up to this present day been no one who has survived it except Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He's the first fruits from the dead, and still the first fruits from the dead. So we're talking about a universal experience, and yet in our society it's the great unmentionable. Why? Well for the simple reason that we're sinners and we have no answer for it. It's there before us, and we do everything that we possibly can not to think about it, forgetting that in God's Holy Word we have God's answer for the judgment that he's pronounced upon all of us in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. For here we have the marvelous statement that “according to God's own gracious purpose, given in Christ before the world began, made manifest by the appearing of the savior, he has abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel.” What a magnificent message, death ought to bring a smile to the face of all of us when we think of the ultimate issues that lie before the individual who knows this message and by God's grace has been brought to the place where he has entrusted himself to it.

Well there are other immensities in this passage too, and we want to look at them. The first thing that Paul does in the passage we've selected is to appeal for fellow suffering from his Legate. The apostle is suffering and he asks Timothy to suffer with him for the sake of the gospel. Hanley Mole, according to John Stott used to say that whenever he opened up 2 Timothy, he found that when he began to read it, he found something like a mist gathering in his eyes as he read it. And those who read Hanley Mole's literature will understand why because he was a godly man and a scholar, but also a man of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And so Paul addresses his young friend, “Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.” Incidentally, there is no sure indication that Timothy ever had been ashamed of association with the Apostle Paul. But you can understand how he might have had occasion to be ashamed. Because shame would naturally arise in the proclamation of one that is of our Lord Jesus Christ who appeared to be no better than a dead Jew to the society in which he lived. And he must have received some criticisms along that same line.

“Why are you pressing upon us?” John Calvin said, putting into the mouths of the opposers of young Timothy, “Why are you pressing upon us a doctrine that you see the whole world hissing at?” And the whole world was hissing at the gospel, so there was plenty of opportunity for Timothy to be embarrassed about association with the apostle and especially with the dead Jew, Jesus of Nazareth. We don’t know any reason to think that Timothy was, but Paul does encourage him, “Do not be ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, or of me his prisoner.” I found that very interesting incidentally, when Paul says, “Me his prisoner.” Disown Paul? How could Timothy disown Paul when Paul was the instrumentality of the blessing of life for him? And further, Paul says, by the way Timothy, he said, “I’m the Lord’s prisoner.” I’m not Nero’s, I’m the Lord’s prisoner, and being the Lord’s prisoner, in effect says, “Look, we’re in the hands of a providential God who controls all the circumstances of life, everybody thinks that I’m a prisoner of Caesar, but I’m not a prisoner of Caesar, I’m a prisoner of God.” So, Timothy if there is any wimpiness, don’t be ashamed of me, I’m the Lord’s prisoner. Suffer with me, and carry on your work.

When I was going to Chicago every week, teaching at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and I would pick up the tribune and read there the things that were said about it and occasionally listen to the radio. Senator Adlai Stevenson the Third decided that he didn’t like to be a senator; he was going to run for governor of Illinois. So he ran for governor. But Senator Stevenson had some characteristics about him that suggested wimpiness, and so his opponents took advantages of it. And the little figures would say things about Senator Stevenson being a wimp. And it became fairly widely preached about by the politicians that he was a wimp. And nobody wants to elect a wimp to office, even one so well known as Adlai Stevenson’s son who was a United States senator.

Mike Royko I believe devoted a column to this and in the column he said when Mr. Stevenson went out of his way to devote some time to proof that he was not a wimp, Royko said, “Anyone who seeks to say that he is not a wimp publicly is a nerd.”

[Laughter] Well, Timothy, I don't believe Timothy was a wimp. But the apostle wants to be sure that he's having fellowship with him, he wants him to be a partaker of the sufferings that necessarily go with the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, “Suffer with me for the sake of the gospel according to the power of God.

Now the power of God is unfolded in the verses that follow. And this is the sustaining power, and this is the great immensity that underlies all of Paul's life and ministry. Here is in verse 9 and verse 10, a brief, a graphic description of the manifested power of God in salvation. And it suggests for any who may be tempted to play the part of a wimp, that this is why you should not be a Christian wimp. That is that you should take every advantage that is put in your way to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to you family, to your friends, to the casual acquaintances with whom you come in contact. This is why you must not play the wimp, you've been saved, you've been called by Heaven's eternal purpose of grace in our sponsor, our representative and our king, the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, “Who hath saved us, who has delivered us.” That's the expression of his power, look if you don't think that it takes the power of God to save you, then let me tell you, because I know you, it does. And you have my permission to say that of me. Only God can save you, only God can save me. Take a look deep down in your heart, a realistic look, and you will say, yes, if I am saved it's by the power of God. And even now as a saved individual, throughout your day, there are the things, the thoughts that come in your mind, the experiences of life, that give you every opportunity in the world to sin further and many of us at times do, we're ashamed of that.

Now how did he do it? Well, Paul talks about the method of it when he says, “It's the gracious purpose of God.” Let me just underline a few words, look, I want to tell you, I could preach for a long time on this passage. And you might miss your meal, you might miss part of the afternoon, you'd miss your afternoon nap. It's the gracious, notice he says, “Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works.” Why it was something that was given before. It was given in eternal times, it's

not of works. All Christians know that they're not saved by works, they're not saved by religion, they're not saved by the ordinances, they're not saved by their education, they're not saved by their culture, they're not saved because they are possessed of blessings of God that are beyond the blessings of the average member of our society, they're not saved by tradition, they're not saved because their an Episcopalian or a Presbyterian or a Baptist, look they're saved in spite of those facts. You're saved not of works. To cite the text again, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it's the gift of God, not of works, lest any one should boast.” Don't boast about your salvation.

It's the gracious work of God. But it has its beginning in eternity. It's an eternal purpose, no dependence on anything human and external fundamentally. Not that in time we do not necessarily believe, we do. God doesn't believe for us, we believe, but it's God who initiates it, it's God who brings it to pass. It begins in the eternity past. Not according to our works, but according to his own gracious purpose, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. It's not only something that's eternal, it's covenantal. It's given us in Christ Jesus, and the covenant that was consummated between the persons of the Trinity as the plan of redemption was determined in past, the Father doing his work, the Son doing his work, the Spirit doing his work, and we the objects of that magnificent work.

So, it's covenantal, it's in Christ Jesus. And incidentally, if it's in Christ Jesus, before, as he says, before the world began, the preexistence of our Lord Jesus is assumed. It's in Christ Jesus. And not only is it assumed, but also, we are taught here that there is only one savior. Because it's his gracious eternal purpose in Christ Jesus before the world began. Not in anyone else, but in Christ Jesus. Not in the apostles, not in the prophets, not in any holy man, but in Christ Jesus, the preexistent Son of God is the only savior. Neither is there salvation in any other. There is one name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved the Apostle Peter said.

So it's his gracious, eternal, covenantal and then historically manifested purpose in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. For he says, “What is now made manifest by the epiphany of our Savior Jesus Christ.” And incidentally, you probably already know this, but when he says the appearing of our Savior, if you'll just turn back to 1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 1. Let me read you these words, “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior.” Now, God our Savior by itself can be a reference to Jesus Christ because he is God too. God is a term that applies to all of the persons of the Trinity, the three. But there's no question about the person to whom Paul refers this in 1 Timothy 1:1. He says, “By the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ which is our hope.” So the Father is called the Savior in Paul's first epistle to Timothy, but now here, when he says, “Now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior, he attaches the term Jesus Christ. So in other words, the one who is called our Savior, our Savior God in the first epistle, is now here that same term is applied to our Lord Jesus Christ. So not only then is our Lord Jesus the one in whom the purpose of God finds its consummation and he is preexistent. And not only is he the only Savior, but he is also a divine savior. That is a person who is himself the eternal God. And let me tell you as I've told you so often, if we did not an eternal, divine, Savior God Jesus Christ we'd have no assurance of any true genuine voice from God.

So often we read the Old Testament and forget that it's our Lord who gave the ultimate affirmation that the Old Testament's the word of God. And we tend to think that we could have been just as happy if we had been ministered to by the prophets as by the apostles. Well I think in one sense we could have been, but so far as the ultimate confirmation of the inspiration of Scripture and also of the fact that our salvation is from God, that ultimate confirmation comes from our Lord Jesus in his appearance, his epiphany. And that's why we have to have a Trinity as well. We have a Father who is God. We have a Son who is God who saves sinners and who also affirms that the message concerning God the prophets and others have given is truly from God, and we

have a Spirit who applies it to our heart. So, this particular purpose of God has been historically manifested in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ involving the whole work of regeneration. What a magnificent purpose, gracious, eternal, covenantal, historically accomplished in our Lord's coming.

Verse 10 has to do with the things that are temporal. Verse 9 had to do with the things that are eternal. So in Christ, the soul Savior, the preexistent divine Savior and now, manifested. I like that word, manifested because, you see, what it does is connect Jesus' ministry with the ministry of the Old Testament prophets. In other words, the fact that our Lord Jesus has been manifested indicates that the things that were said in the Old Testament were true. But now the manifestation shows us that our Lord's ministry is no real novelty. I think it was John Calvin who said, “The knowledge of these things has been revealed to us by faith. In this way the apostle wisely connects the gospel with God's most ancient promises so that its supposed novelty might not bring it into contempt.” It's not a novelty; it's the confirmation and consummation of the Old Testament prophetic message.

Now, there's one word that I want to underline for a moment. It's in verse 9, “but according to his own purpose and grace.” His own, that little adjective, idion, his own purpose and grace. What a magnificent word that is, his own, what that means is essentially that all that we understand of this magnificent purpose is something that arose only from within the depths of the divine good pleasure. It's God's own purpose, not ours, not anyone else's, not the apostles, it belongs to God himself. This magnificent plan of salvation is God's plan of salvation. Never forget it, his own purpose and grace, and given to us before the ages began.

You know, when you see Arminian teaching and you see it in the light of the word of the apostles, you cannot help but feel it's very difficult to read the New Testament so poorly. Well, suppose someone were to say, “Yes, it's God's sovereign purpose but it's ours because he foresaw in ages past the works that we would do which

enable us to be elected by him.” That, you’ve heard me on this, I’m not going to labor this very much for the moment. But I cannot say it is anything other than what Mr. Calvin said. He calls it a sophistical evasion, that God was influenced by the works that he foresaw. Even Calvin said, “It doesn’t deserve a long answer.” Because, let’s assume there is a fall. Let’s assume men are fallen. Let’s assume the sin principle indwells us. Isn’t that the teaching of the word of God? It is the teaching of the word of God. What kind of works do you think individuals who are indwelt by the sin principle are going to do? Works that are pleasing to God? No, just the opposite, works that are displeasing to God. And so if God looked down through the years and saw the works that men would do, he would see things that displease him. He would see things that justify his rejection of the fallen race. And the idea that in looking down through the years he would gain in knowledge, give us a kind of God who’s not really truly God, he actually gained some knowledge. Took a look down through the years and said (Why are you laughing, you’re thinking just as I’m thinking.) I see my friend here smiling, I won’t name his name, but he’s thinking just as I’m thinking that if he looked down through the years and saw me, he wouldn’t gain anything for that matter but a knowledge of how necessary grace is in order to be saved. And he is not a God who gains in knowledge in such a way. So, it is a sophistical evasion of the truth. We are the objects of a sovereign God’s merciful work, conceived out of his own great good pleasure in the ages of eternity past. Only God is the source of our salvation.

As a matter of fact, if he looked down through the years and saw that I would do some works and therefore he chose me, well there’s no need to have election anyway. If you look down through the years and see that he’s going to do some things that are pleasing to God, why elect him? He’s elected himself. How foolish! How foolish is such a doctrine. And the only reason it’s so widely current, is that we are so blind to the spiritual things. And we don’t think about the things of the Lord God. Enough of that now.

In the latter part of verse 10 he talks about the ground of all of this work. He says, "Who hath abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel." Our Lord's work was destructive; he abolished death by daring its penalty. And it was salvific; he brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel. By dying death he slayed. He illuminated the comparative dusk and obscurity of the Old Testament. Death, slain spiritually for he died for its spiritual penalty. Death slain physically in that he rose from the dead. Death slain eternally, the resurrection hope becomes a certain hope. The implicitness of the Old Testament although in my opinion there are many explicit passages in the Old Testament. But looking at it in that way, the implicitness of the Old Testament comes into explicitness in the New Testament. That which was an embryo comes to birth in the ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What was in Christ eternally is now done in time by Christ himself.

The objective facts become operative Paul says through the gospel. Death, the great unmentionable, the apostles never thought of it as the great unmentionable. They thought of it as something that was absolutely essential to be mentioned and for us to be warned against the death that waits all of us if we have not believed in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So, the apostle confronts head on the experience that everyone in this audience, every one of you sitting right where you are will face. Some perhaps soon, some perhaps years down, no one knows sometimes the youth goes first, but all of us face it. All of us face the necessity of facing up to the fact that death is a universal experience. "It's appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment."

What Paul says this great message, "I was appointed by Jesus a herald, and I have been appointed an apostle. I've been sent out and a teacher of the Gentiles." There are lot's of Gentiles here, you need this teaching. And those of us who may be Jewish, you need the teaching too, Paul was actually an apostle sent to both of these companies, but as the world changed, sent specifically, more specifically, to the Gentiles. When I look at this, I cannot help but think of the emptiness of the little things. Money, business, music,

how many of our young people walk around with something on their head to let us know that they're listening to music? And sometimes I wonder if they're listening to music to avoid having to listen or think about other things. And then sports, the Cowboys are back. The Cowboys won last night, twenty-four to fourteen. Yours truly spent a few minutes wasting sometime before it, enjoying it. It's native to us men. I have a prophecy; there are three stars on the Cowboys. We have Aikman, everybody knows that, Emmitt Smith, we have that, but down though the years if he's not hurt, Alvin Harper is going to catch a lot of passes, dramatically. Now, I want to ask you a question. Isn't that great, isn't that a great subject in the light of death, death which every one of us faces. So, the unmentionable, the emptiness of these little things and I didn't say anything about politics.

Bunyan's two statements are very interesting, he talks about the little things that people are so concerned with. And then he talked about those poor old women who had an understanding that Bunyan didn't have sitting in the sun discussing the things of God which to him were far above mind. Perhaps some of you sitting in this audience, far above your mind these things of God that Dr. Johnson occasionally gets excited about.

There's a marvelous story about the Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, one of the great Christian Prime Ministers of Great Brittan. And Mr. Gladstone once said after he had come in contact with Thomas Chalmers who had such a great influence on Scottish theology, that Chalmers was the kind of individual who was only interested in the big things. He said he had an “utter incapacity to indulge in small talk.” He simply lived someone has said, among the mountains. Everything about Chalmers was massive, monumental, magnificent. In fact, in a great speech before the Scottish general assembly of his church he made a comment about how he as a pastor in the Scottish church had finally come to realize that he was wasting his time on the insignificant things. He said, “Being a mathematician,” he said, “I have forgotten two magnitudes about which mathematical science gatherest.” And he told this vast audience, “I thought not about the littlest of time and I recklessly thought not about the greatness of eternity.” That's what

we need to think about. It reminds me too of the Duke of Wellington of whom also it was said, he himself making the comment, that he was not much for small talk. Perhaps one of the reasons that Chalmers was the great man that he was for his time and the Duke was such a great military figure for his time was that they didn't have time for the small talk.

I read something this week that really spoke to me as a preacher. And I look back over my preaching now forty years or forty-five or so, and a Canadian pastor was leaving his church a few years back, and the Canadian Presbyterian, the journal of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, commented on the farewell services of this minister. And he's closed a two years ministry in the church and a venerable member of the congregation came up to him afterwards and bid his pastor a tearful goodbye and he remarked, "Well sir, I'm sorry to see you go, I never had but one objection to you, your preaching was always too horizontal." How [Indistinct] That's true of our preaching today, it's horizontal. We talk about psychology, we talk about the experiences of life, those are the things that really grip us, the things that we say the people in the audience are really interested in hearing. No, no, we need some of the verticals, some of the verticals, the relationship with the Lord God in Heaven. And we who are a sinful people down here on the earth when we face the verticals finally and if we're not sound there, we're not going to be sound in anything.

So, to sum it up, I'm running over time, the immensities, what a tonic they are. Jowett, one of the great preachers of a generation or so ago, he once said about the pulpit, "We must preach more upon the great texts of the Scriptures, for the pulpit is the home of the immensities, the infinities and the eternities." James Denny made a similar statement, I'm just going to quote it from memory, it's something like, "No man can preach or should preach if he's not able to make great statements about Jesus Christ." We tried to make them today. If you're here in the audience, and you've never believed in our Lord this great gracious eternal purpose by which the Lord Jesus is our sponsor, our

covenantal head, has accomplished the work of redemption for those who are in him, that's what you need. And in your lost condition, for you're lost, you're first responsibility and it's a perilous responsibility, is to flee to Christ immediately. Who knows, leaving this auditorium may mean your entrance shortly into eternity. May God in his grace touch your heart, may you come to him, may you bow your head acknowledge your lost condition, thank God for what he's done through Christ, receive the gift of eternal life. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for the gracious words that the apostle wrote to young Timothy, telling us of a gracious eternal purpose in Christ Jesus which was realized in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus the benefits of which are available for lost sinners such we are. Oh God, how grateful we are, how grateful we ought to be even beyond the depths of our gratitude now oh Lord, help us to understand how lost we are apart from you ...

[AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY]