



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 14:1-3

“If It Were Not So”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We welcome you to the ministry of the word service in Believers Chapel this Sunday August the 25, 1991. I always look forward to making the announcements because they're always brief. [Laughter] You have the bulletin before you the announcements are found within it, if you can read, we hope that you will look at the pages that may be of interest to you and respond to the announcements that are there. Generally speaking we put in the announcements the things that are important for all of us to read, so I hope that you will read them. And we particularly ask that you pay attention to the prayer requests and that during the week as you yourself pray that you'll remember these that have requested our prayers for them. There are many who have serious needs and they will be grateful and I know the elders of the Chapel would be grateful also if you would participate in the prayers for them.

We're turning to John chapter 14 and reading a very brief passage this morning for our Scripture reading, John chapter 14 verse 1 through verse 3. Later on in the message we will read another passage or so, but for our Scripture reading, John 14:1 through 3. But I'd like for you also to remember I'm not sure it's necessary to say this, but perhaps for some, that this is found in the Upper Room Discourse that our Lord gave to the apostles as he was on his way to the death at Calvary's cross, and these are some of the

words of exhortation and comfort that he gave to them. And John 14:1 through 3 is particularly for what I'd like to say the Lord willing in the message. In the preceding chapter he has perhaps startled the apostles a bit to tell them he is soon to go away and be glorified and furthermore he says, “Where I am going you cannot come.” Now that was something that startled Peter enough for Peter to respond to it and ask him, “Lord whither goest Thou?” And our Lord answered him by saying, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.” Well that caused Peter to also ask why he could not follow him and he volunteered that he would lay down his life for Jesus' sake. And our Lord knowing what was in the heart of Peter as is in the heart of all of us, said, Is it really true Peter that you will lay down your life for my sake? I'd like to say to you very definitely, “verily verily, I say unto you, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me three times.”

And now, the discourse to them particularly begins and he says, “Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.” Now let me say that this particular expression, due to the fact that in the original language the word for you believe, or believe is the same in other words, the declarative you believe as well as the imperative, believe are the same form and consequently can be rendered different ways. This particular statement, you believe in God believe also in me as is in the text before me can be rendered in these four ways. It could be you believe in God and ye or you believe also in me. It could be rendered; you believe in God, believe also in me. That is the declarative statement and then the imperative. It can be rendered, believe in God, the imperative and you believe in me, declarative statement. Or finally, it may be two imperatives, Believe in God and in me, believe. Now personally I prefer that, but obviously if it can be rendered four different ways there are some other possibilities that have some reasonable basis for taking it in other ways, but that it seems to me is the point that he's making. “Believe in God, and in me believe.”

Then in verse 2 he says, “In my Father's house are many mansions.” We all would like mansions the rendering mansions from the Authorized Version is probably one of the better renderings as far as impressing itself upon our minds. Who would not like to have a mansion? The term mansion is derived from a Latin term mansio which means simply a dwelling place. And that's the force also of the Greek word here. So,

“In my Father's house are many dwelling places (is probably truer to the sense.) if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Someone has suggested that that's one of the best definitions of Heaven in all of the Bible and I wouldn't disagree with it necessarily. May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we turn to Thee with confidence in the light of our Lord's words to us to come to Thee and to expect from Thee an answer to our petitions. And Lord today we turn with that anticipation and we pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ. Not simply those believers in Believers Chapel but believers in other evangelical churches where the gospel is proclaimed. We pray for them and whether in this country or other countries upon the face of this globe, we pray for the believers who may be located in assemblies there. We thank Thee for the confidence that we have of the greatness of the church of Jesus Christ because standing behind the church is the greatness of our Lord built upon the foundation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And so Lord, we pray for other fellow believers and ask Thy blessing upon them.

We pray for our country, for the United States of America and for President Bush. We thank Thee for the stability of this country down through the years and we pray that it may continue. And in the critical days that we are seeing about us in this world, Lord we ask that Thou would keep the United States, protect this country. May the freedoms that we enjoy be enjoyed into the indefinite future. May there be especially freedom to proclaim the gospel of Christ.

We ask Lord for any in our audience who may be here for the first time. For our visitors, we pray for them. We pray that their time here may be of spiritual benefit to them. For the sick, for those who've requested our prayers, for those who have special needs and for some who may have found it difficult perhaps to tell us of their needs, we pray for them as well. We ask Lord that Thou would give healing as there is need and that may the other petitions that are upon our hearts find a positive response with Thee. We thank Thee for the word of God which tells us that Thou doest hear us. And enable us Lord in Thy grace to accept the answer that Thou doest give. We ask Thy blessing now upon our meeting. May we sing to the glory of God, may we listen to the exposition of Scripture and may the Holy Spirit be our teacher as we do. We commit our meeting to Thee and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The majority of the hymns in our book are fairly good; there are in my opinion some volumes that perhaps would be a bit better particularly in the light of the things for which we stand. But that hymn I enjoy singing. It's gooder then a lot of the others that we sing. [Laughter] So I like to sing the sentiments that are expressed within it and hope that God will make them true to my life.

The subject for today is taken from John chapter 14 and verse 2 in which our Lord says, “If it were not so.” That men have apprehension and uncertainty regarding the invisible world is not surprising. The Scriptures tell us that we are made in the image and likeness of God and the fact that we are made in the image and likeness of God means

that there are certain things that are true of us that are true of God. Theologians often discuss in great detail precisely what is meant, but surely it's obvious that certain things are meant, personality for example. And the very fact that we are created in the image and likeness of God makes it not surprising at all that we should be interested in the life beyond this life, for our God is an infinite everlasting God.

We also are taught in Romans chapter 1 that everyone has been created with the knowledge of the existence of God. That even atheists or agnostics who either express denial or doubts that they too, in spite of the words that they tell us about themselves fundamentally deep down within believe in the existence of God. To believe of course in the existence of God does not make one a Christian. And so when we speak about an individual and say, “Oh but he believes in God.” And we transfer to that statement Christianity or Christian confession it's contrary to the teachings of the prophets and the apostles. To believe in God is something God gives all men and women. But it's beyond that that Christianity has its reality in the doctrine of the Triune God and of the atonement through the second person of the Trinity and the application of that atonement through the Holy Spirit in the gift of repentance and faith.

So it's not surprising that men should have apprehension concerning the future in the light of our creation in the image of God. And the Scriptures themselves of course settle the question as far as the Scriptures are concerned they point quite clearly to the existence of eternal life or everlasting life for all but eternal life in the biblical sense for believers in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's very striking to me that in our society we have evidences of this that are incidental. Years ago I used to make my way down four or five times a week down Swiss Avenue from about down Live Oak and Swiss Avenue, but particularly Live Oak I should have said, from Skillman down to almost into town and there used to be a reader advertising her ability to give you information regarding the future. And every day my eyes would glance at that sign and I smiled inwardly because the house never gave you the impression that the individual was very

successful in their profession to start with. [Laughter] But nevertheless I noticed that. And then over on Alpha, not too far from here on the way to the post office from my house we pass by another little place that has a sign of a reader out in front. And what kind of reading, what kind of psychic exists there or claim to exist there I don't know. But psychic phenomenon themselves, whether true or false, or true in some measure, some may feel are themselves testimony to the fact that deep within the human heart is the conviction that there's something beyond us in this life.

I think of pathetic Bishop Pike of the Episcopalian Church who a generation ago was on the front pages of our papers often and with making outrageous statements about God, particularly influenced by some of the individuals who were writing about the death of God at the time. And then later on after the bishop's son had passed from this life into the life beyond, the bishop making again pathetic attempts to make contact with him through séances. These were in our papers and we all read them.

And in thinking about things like that which we still have about us, this past week I ran across something from Rudyard Kipling that I did not know he had written. Last in the series that I gave on the life of David, about forty of the messages I believe. One of the messages was on Saul's visit to the Witch at Endor. And thinking about the rappings and tappings of séances whether they are genuine or whether they are not genuine, it's obvious that if they were genuine and I don't believe that for one moment. But if there were genuine tappings and rappings, if it were possible for a psychic to cause rappings and tappings to take place, what in the world would we learn from that? If for example my house was home for squirrels, it's home for squirrels now, but they have better knowledge than they had before, they didn't realize the fact that I was an enemy of what they were doing. And so we have settled that question among us, but they're still there, but let's just assume, let's just assume that the squirrels were running over the top of my house and they rarely do that anymore. It's very interesting, squirrels are more knowledgeable of the facts of life than I really had thought. But at any rate, they used to

run over it a whole lot more than they do now. Somehow they feel it is a bit dangerous to do it now. But what would we learn about a squirrel if we just heard a squirrel pattering over our roofs and we didn't know any other thing about a squirrel.

Or for example, if you moved into a home, a duplex let's say and there was a wall between you and the people who live next door, and they moved in when you were not there. And you heard them walking all around in their house, what would you learn about them by the fact that they walked around in their houses? Well you wouldn't know anything that was really worth while except that maybe they had heavy feet or something like that. Or maybe they stumbled over furniture every now and then. But as far as knowing anything about them, you wouldn't know anything about them.

A naturalist could form no conception of the habits and appearance of squirrels by hearing the patter of the feet on the roof of a building. Well Rudyard Kipling put a little stanza together and pointed out that the road that runs down to Endor is a fruitless road. He wrote, “Oh the road to Endor is the oldest road and the craziest road of all. Straight it runs to the witches abode as it did in the days of Saul. And nothing has changed but the sorrow in store for such as go down to road to Endor.”

So the Bible contrarily has a very clear testimony to life beyond this life after death. But it is not a full testimony, there are many things that we can of course learn from Scripture, but so far as learning precisely what life after this life is going to be, well we're going to have to wait until we are there. Job does tell us that he knows his Redeemer lives and he knows also that one day his Redeemer will stand upon the earth. And he knows furthermore that out of his flesh he shall see him. Abraham we are told in the Bible died after living for a hundred and seventy-five years and he went to be with his fathers.

The important thing for us is what does our Lord say? Even more important than prophets and apostles, what does Jesus say? Although, since our Lord has authenticated what prophets say and what apostles say, we can trust them, but ultimately our faith rests

upon our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our divine Lord and what he says. So I'd like to just think a little bit with you about this matter in the remainder of our time together.

And first of all, I'd like to just go over a bit the reality of the invisible world. Just a brief reminder of what the Bible does say. I mentioned Job and the statement in Job chapter 19 is one of the great statements in the word of God concerning the faith of an individual a great man in the life beyond the grave. Listen to what Job says in chapter 19 and verse 23 through verse 27 of that book. He says,

“Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”

You notice this about Job, characteristic of the apostles as well, he says, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” He doesn't say now after all of my answers that I have given to the men who are discussing these matters with me, we may therefore assume. But “I know that my Redeemer lives. He has found his Redeemer, he has found his vindicator and he knows that. Bildad the Shuhite has been just before speaking to him and Bildad has sought to say things that were contrary to that affirmation. He said in chapter 18, “Yea the light of the wicked shall be put out and the spark of his fire shall not shine.” In the 13th verse of that chapter he has said, “It shall devour the strength of his skin even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.” In verse 17, “His remembrance shall perish from the earth and he shall have no name in the street, he shall be driven from light into darkness and chased out of the world.” And so on. And Job's plea after listening to Bildad is the plea of so man when they listen to people who don't really know what they're talking about. And Job in chapter 19 I believe it is in verse 21 and 22

he says, “Have mercy upon me, have pity upon me oh ye my friends, for the hand of God is touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

The definiteness of the statement is impressive, “I know that my redeemer liveth.” I guess all of us have thought of baseball games, we’ve watched baseball games, we’ve watched close plays at the home plate, we’ve noticed men standing on second base, and the game depends upon a single to the outfield. And so we can imagine someone leading off of second base and the pitcher throws the ball in toward the catcher and the batter hits a clean single out to left field. And as the runner from second base turns third base the coach waves him on in home. And the outfielder with a strong arm throws toward the catcher. And they arrive about the same time at the home plate and can you imagine this happening? The umpire doesn’t say anything but with a mike he says to the crowd, “You know there’s some things that make me think he was safe. And there are some things however that make me think that he was out.” And about that time there comes some cries from the stands, “Kill the umpire!” And great amen’s swell across it because you know there are times when we do need definiteness. And Job’s great statement has impressed me ever since I read it, “I know that my Redeemer lives.”

When we looked through David’s life, I made reference to Psalm 16 verse 9 through verse 11 where David speaks concerning the life beyond the grave and there he says

“Therefore my heart’s glad my glory rejoiceth, my flesh shall rest and hope for thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither will Thy suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou will show me the path of life in thy presence is fullness of joy at thy right hand there are pleasures for ever more.”

In the very next psalm in verse 15 of chapter 17, he says, “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.” We

remember the transfiguration in which the Lord Jesus is on the mount with Peter James and John and is transfigured before them and Moses and Elijah appear and talk about his exodus which he is to accomplish in Jerusalem. And from that incident itself, if we had nothing else we would have the conviction of life beyond the grave.

We have the testimony of the Apostle Paul and remember the statements he made in the 5th chapter of his second epistle in which he says that we have a home in Heaven and furthermore he said that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And later on in that same epistle, he said that he himself was caught up to the third heaven and heard things that were unspeakable, things that it would be unlawful for him to unfold for us. We needn't go ahead and belabor the point, I'm sure that most of you in this auditorium believe very definitely that there is reality in the invisible world beyond this world of which we are a part.

But I do think that often we exaggerate the appeal of the supernatural and we sometimes secretly long for something magical to happen or something miraculous to happen because we have the feeling many of us that if something miraculous did happen then faith would be created as a result of it. I think of what Luke writes in chapter 16 of his gospel as bearing on this point. And I'm going to read these verses for you. It's Luke chapter 16 and verse 19 through the remainder of the chapter. This is the story, the parable let's say a word about that, or the history of Lazarus and the rich man. Jesus says,

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores. (Now this is not the Lazarus who later was restored to life.) And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell (that's Hades,) in Hades he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeing Abraham

afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, no, (Authorized Version text has nay but the term that is used is an intensive form of the negative and so he said) no, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one should rise from the dead.”

Now let me say, I do not know whether this is a parable or a historical event that our Lord is talking about. There are evangelical men, believing men who divide over that issue. I can only say this to you that there is no other parable told by our Lord in which the name of an individual is given. And so consequently it would be unique in that sense. And it may well be that he is describing historical events. The passage of course is very important for several reasons. It's important because it touches on such questions as a second chance after we have died. Will there be a second chance, an opportunity to respond to the gospel then? And this chapter does not give us any hope that there is such. It bears on the topic of eternal punishment because we have emphasized in this passage that the rich man is in torment. Several times that term is used I believe about four, I didn't bother to count them, but about that many. It also touches on the question of soul sleep, that is when I die do I just sleep or am I conscious? Paul said to be absent

from the body is to be present with the Lord, as far as I can tell; this chapter is no help for those who believe in soul sleep.

But most of all, this chapter is one of the greatest of the chapters that deals with the sufficiency of Holy Scripture as we shall see. Do we need psychics? No, we don't need psychics. But I want you to notice what Jesus implies in this account that he tells. Here is a man who is concerned for himself and for his family, and yet he's in Hades. Here is a man who is in torment but he has a concern for his own family. In other words, a concern for ones family doesn't put one within the ranks of the faithful. There are certain things that we would admire in individuals who go straight to an eternity of separation from the Lord God. So he has a concern for his family.

And he even prays in Hades, his prayer is heard, but his request is denied. And so here is an individual who has a concern for his family and believes in prayer. “Abraham have mercy upon me.” And then in verse 27, “I pray Thee therefore Father that Thou would send them to my father's house.” Of course he's praying to Abraham and that's wrong, but nevertheless, he is praying. He's a man who believes in prayer and he loves his family, his brethren. But nevertheless, prayer is unavailing in Hades.

That's not all about this man, we read in verse 30, “Nay Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” Here is a man who knows really why he's in Hades. He knows he's there because he has not repented. He knows about repentance. But we also learn from this that repentance is not given in Hades.

Not only that, he believes in the power of preaching, or the power of a preacher. First of all, he says, “Send Lazarus.” And asks him to perform a task, but then also he asks that someone would be sent to his father's family's house, that his brethren might here the word that would keep them from coming to the place where he is. But again, the preaching of individuals is not heard from Hades.

So, our Lord is telling us some very significant things about life after death. But one thing that he says to my mind overshadows everything else. And that is the statement

that he makes at the end of the chapter when he says, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets they will not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” And that an answer to the rich man who says, “No, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” That’s so striking to me. It’s very interesting to me that one man by the name of Lazarus, very curiously, Lazarus, another Lazarus did come from the grave and men did not respond to him. As we know, some believed, some did not believe. When the Lord Jesus came from the grave, some believed and some did not believe. So when he says, “No, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will believe,” he invents another way of salvation. That strong no, “No, father Abraham,” is a negative which means something like on the contrary, it draws a line of cancellation through all the promises of the Scriptures that were written at that time and invents and substitutes a new means of salvation, one that was invented in Hell not in Heaven contrary to our Lord’s words, salvation came through responding to Moses and to the prophets.

Now we have a fuller revelation, and if we do not respond to that we have even a more serious and grave responsibility if we refuse to believe the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments, the words of our Lord and the apostles who follow him. So, I read from this, one of the reasons why there is so little correspondence that takes place between the world within the veil and the world here.

The problem with the rich man is he, like so many others have enormously exaggerated the appeal of the invisible. And we have lots of Christians who do that today. They are looking for the surprising, they’re looking for the magical, there are looking for the miraculous all kinds of things instead of putting first and foremost before us the sufficiency of Holy Scripture for salvation and for life as the Scriptures claim authenticated by our Lord and the apostles.

Now with that, I want to turn and say a few words concerning John 14:1-3 and the statement that the Lord Jesus makes, “If it were not so.” The apostles are concerned

because of the future. Our Lord has announced that he's going to leave them. They have natural apprehension, they have natural uncertainty, as a matter of fact, fear has gripped them as they think about the future without the Lord, the one upon whom they have leaned so much. They are troubled evidently, “Let not your heart be troubled,” Jesus said to them. Incidentally, that term is used of our Lord as well. In his case however, the stress rests upon his troubling in the light of the fact that he will die on Calvary's cross as the substitute and there bear the penalty for our sins. And that's certainly good reason for the God-man to fear troubled. Because no one can understand the sufferings of our Lord and the cry, “My God my God why hast Thou forsaken me?” is only an expression of what must have been going on within the heart of our Lord as he was separated from the Father and bore for us the penalty of our sins.

So, let not your heart be troubled. And notice what he says, “Believe in God, and in me, believe. In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you.” Now here is a statement of silence from our Lord. “If it were not so, I would have told you.” In other words, silence. “If it were not so” however, “I would have told you.” If ever silence was golden, the silence of our Lord here is golden for troubled souls. “If it were not so, I would have told you.” “I'm going to prepare a place for you.” Dwelling places for you, that's all that's necessary, if it were not so, I would have told you. All of our trials are answered in the silence of our Lord.

The call to trust of course is fundamental. “Believe in God, Believe also in me.” Dwelling places will be constructed for you. There is incidentally, a reliance upon Moses words in Deuteronomy chapter 1 probably when Moses speaks about how the Lord has gone before the children of Israel to prepare a place for them, and here our Lord's words seem to bear definitely upon that. But this, “if it were not so,” I suggest to you this covers all the possibilities of troubles. Terrors beyond this life? If it were not so, I would have told you. I am preparing dwelling places for you and so consequently, troubles, terrors beyond this life, uncertainties as to happiness, uncertainties as to homelessness,

loneliness, if anything exists in this universe that could bring fright, then he would have told us. All is well for those who have resigned themselves to the arms and to the care of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. “If it were not so, I would have told you.” If you reflect upon this for a moment I think you’ll see what a significant statement this is of our Lord. No reason for me to talk, if it were not so, what I am saying to you I’m preparing a place for you, I would have told you. I would have told you. So if you have troubles that lie beyond this life, I would have warned you.

H.G. Wells is not the person that you kind of think of at a time like this but he made a significant statement I think. He said with reference to communication between this world and the world that lies beyond us, “It’s not surprising that we do not have that kind of communication.” He wrote something called *First Men in the Moon* and he said, “You cannot describe the phenomena of one world in the phraseology of another. The terms do not fit. They convey crude and even false impressions. So, the Lord Jesus on that last night attempted to describe the life of Heaven in the language of Earth. If he had done that then he could only have imprinted upon the minds of his people images that would have been mere caricatures of the reality. And so he said nothing. Speech could only have led to confusion. We do not have the capacity to understand it. But as someone added, in his speechlessness he said this very striking thing about his speechlessness. His reticence he said was to be construed as a promise. “If it were not so I would have told you.”

General Booth was the founder of the Salvation Army and his wife’s name was Catherine. She died before he did and so they made arrangements she particularly knowing that she was going to die made arrangements to communicate with him after her death if when she got to Heaven she said she found something there that might be of help to him in his life until he gets there. So for some time after the general looked for a word from her as perhaps letting him know that there are certain things that he would

much better know in order to get along well in this particular life. But, the word never came.

When I was just a little boy about the size of these seven young people on the first row up here, the first pew, Harry Houdini was making a name on the front pages, miraculous escapes from almost everything. And then when Houdini died, before he died, Harry Houdini made arrangements to come back the year after his death. And so the newspapers for a number of years afterwards would let us know that the anniversary of his death is soon to come and he's going to make a miraculous escape from the life beyond the grave and tell us something about it. But Harry never appeared, never gave us any message, no rappings or tappings from Harry. And now of course, most of you don't even know who Harry Houdini is. [Laughter]

Martin Luther in one of his most significant little statements, I confess I just ran across this week this. He has a tribute to a robin in one of his writings; he said,

“I have one preacher that I love better than any other upon the earth. It's my little tame robin which preaches to me daily. (He said,) Every night I put his crumbs out on the window sill outside of my bedroom and then the robin is there at night, always there at night, he comes to the window sill and he takes as much of those crumbs that I've put out there as will satisfy his needs, whatever he desires. And from the window sill he hops over to a limb on the tree near by and there he satisfies his food needs and then he lifts up his voice to God and sings his carol of praise and gratitude and then tucks his head under his wing and goes fast asleep and leaves tomorrow to take care of itself.”

And Luther said, he's the very best preacher that I have on earth. If it were not so, I would have told you. We look forward to the future, sometimes it's alarming. Certainly a lot of uncertainty, certainly apprehension, but our Lord has said, “I have gone as the representative of those for whom I have died.” The head of the church is to the right

hand of the Father preparing a place for us and so confident is he and we should be, If it were not so, he the infinite, eternal, second person of the Trinity would have told us so. Oh the sufficiency of God's word for all of life now and hereafter. And so when our Lord says in Luke chapter 16, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, they will not hear though someone rise from the dead,” we turn with great appreciation for the words of our Lord and the prophets and apostles and know that the hope for the future rests right here in the word of God. And you young people sitting on the first pew here, when I am long gone and you have grown and are as old as I am never forget that one thing. The Lord Jesus points us to the word of God and tells us that's sufficient for all of our needs. And of course the sufficiency of faith in the Lord Jesus as the Messiah for all the tremblings of life, we know that and we trust in him. In fact, the one in whom we trust ultimately for all of the experiences of life that lie before us is simply our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Stephen Grellet was one of the great evangelists. He was a Quaker. That might seem strange. But Grellet was so consumed with preaching the word of God that he traveled through country after country. And he not only traveled there and looked for an interpreter but went out of his way to learn the language. Many languages he learned in order to preach the word of God. He tells us how he came to the knowledge of the Lord as his own Savior. He said one day when he was just a young man he was wandering through the forest and had no thoughts of religious experience what so ever. But as the wind was blowing through the trees for some reason, thoughts of eternity came to him and he couldn't get away from it. And he thought eternity, eternity, eternity. It impressed him so much that he went home, got his Bible and began to read the Bible and found in the saving ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ the clues to deliverance from the penalty from his sins which he felt also from the reading of the word of God and the confidence that he had in the future grounded in the word of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So as I close this meditation. If you're here today and you've never believed in our Lord, we remind you that the ultimate hope and trust must in God's grace be found in

him who loves sinners and gave himself for them. If you do not know the Lord Jesus as your own personal savior, the gospel message still goes forth. The words of the prophets, the apostles and our Lord are still before us, the opportunity is still there, we're not in Hades yet. The time for salvation is now. This is the day. May God in his grace so touch your heart that you turn to him, acknowledge your need within your heart, that you need a savior because of your sin, that Christ has come and offered himself for sinners and that you are receiving the gift that God gives in the knowledge of salvation through Christ. Believe in him, trust in him and enter into life.

Let's stand for the benediction. If you're looking for a miracle, you can turn around and look at the clock [Laughter] and there will be one. It's not even twelve yet, I'm giving you back one minute. Let's look to the Lord for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee and thankful for the privilege of pondering and thinking of the things that our Lord has to say through the Scriptures to us. We know these dwelling places exist because he has told us he's preparing them. Our representative and head is in Heaven, we are still here. We think Thee for that marvelous silence expressed there, “If it were not so I would have told you.” ...

[AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY]