



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 14:22-24

“Our Heart: God’s Home”

TRANSCRIPT

[AUDIO BEGINS]...our study is of three verses in the 14th chapter, and our subject is Our Heart: God’s Home. So will you turn to John chapter 14, and will you listen as I read verse 22 through 24 in just a moment.

Let me remind you that in the preceding contexts the Lord Jesus had suggested to the apostles that he was going to leave them and that he would be with them only a little while. After he had gone they would seek him and they would not find him. They could not go where he was going and that provoked a number of questions from the apostles.

We have a question, first of all, by Peter and then a question by Thomas and then a question by Philip and our Lord has answered those questions and in the answering of the question of Philip he also launched into a discussion of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, pointing out that in this age in which we live there is a permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Now the fact that he says in verse 21, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him,” provoked a fourth question, this one from the Apostle Judas. Not the Apostle Judas Iscariot, but the other Apostle Judas, the brother of Thaddeus or Lebbaeus as he is also thought to be. So we want to take up now the question asked by Judas and our Lord’s answer to it.

Let me introduce this with just a few words by way of introduction. There is naturally a persistent hunger in the heart of man for God. Now I know that someone may say immediately, “Well I thought the Bible says, ‘There is none that seeketh after God, no not one.’” Well, of course, that is true. “There is none that seeketh after God, no not one.” But deep down within the heart of man, created in the image of God, there is also this longing for fellowship with God. But that longing is refused, it is repressed, it is ignored, but nevertheless it persists. And the result of the persistence of the longing to know God because we were created for fellowship with him and the constant repression of it, because of the Noahic effects of sin there’s no peace. And that is why the Scriptures say, “There is no peace, saith my God, in the heart of the wicked.”

So one of the reasons for no peace is that they were created for fellowship with God but by virtue of the fall they repress, reject, refuse, fight against the truth. And so we have a condition in which there is, deep down within, a desire for God but a stronger desire to react against him. Augustine said, “Thou hast noticed for thyself and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee, ‘There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.’” Our hearts are restless until they rest in Christ.

The Westminster Confession has said, “The chief end of man is to go with thy God and enjoy him forever.” And so we have this constant struggle, then, in the heart of man. One of the major themes of the Bible and in one sense it is the answer to this longing of man has to do with God presence with men. As a result of sin in the Garden of Eden, Adam and his family were cast out of the garden. In the Book of Revelation in which we have a recurring of all of the great themes with a new heaven and the new air, paradise, the tree of life, we then read there of the saint experiencing the fellowship with God because the dwelling of God is with men. So the glory that man had with God in the beginning was disturbed by the fall, the whole story of the Bible is the process by which God restores the dwelling of God with men, those elect men, the objects of the saving grace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Judas’ question is followed by a tremendous revelation of the condition for full experience of the presence of God. Well let us look at the question that Judas asks. The Lord Jesus said in verse 21, “Ye that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” Now that is a problem for Judas. You might wonder why that is a problem for Judas. He says, “Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” Now this is Judas, the brother of James, also called Lebbaeus, is disturbed by this idea that the Lord Jesus will manifest himself to the disciples. Why should he be disturbed by that? Why, he says here, “How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” So it is clear that what he expected was a manifestation of himself to the world. The idea that he would manifest himself to the disciples, as if to suggest he would not manifest himself to the world, raises the question in his mind.

Now what does that indicate that Judas has been taught to this point? Why, it indicates that he had been taught the he should expect a manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world. In other words, it has been taught him and he has believed that the Lord Jesus would come again and he would come in a visible theophany, he would come as the great Savior God who would finally deal with sin in a Second Advent. And so he expected a visible, personal Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. And since it was a visible, personal Second Advent of the Lord Jesus he expected the whole world to know about the manifestation of the Son. So the idea that, “If you keep my commandments, you have my commandments and keep them, and you love me, you will be loved of my Father, and I will love you and I will manifest myself to you,” suggests something that at this point is contrary to his limited knowledge of systematic theology. After all, he’s not had a chance to attend Believers Chapel, and yet all of these things clarified in his mind. So our Lord is going to answer the question and I want to stress that that is what is on his mind because in the Greek text of verse 22 the words that are emphatic are the words us.

“How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us.” That word is in the emphatic position. “To us you will manifest yourself,” and the other word that is emphatic is the negative, “And not to the world.” Now, of course, he has partially misunderstood our Lord. Our Lord does not deny he will manifest himself to the world, but he is saying that he will manifest himself to the apostles and so Judas is in a little bit of confusion and his confusion is related to his understanding of manifestation as solely a visible, public manifestation.

Now what our Lord will tell Judas is simply this, “Judas, there are two parousias. There are two comings, there are two manifestations. “I do not deny that I am going to manifest myself to the world,” he’s already in opening part of this chapter spoken of his Second Advent, he’s spoken of how he was going to come and again and take them unto himself. In other parts of the ministry that he gave he spoke about his visible manifestation so he does not deny that. But what he is saying is that the visible manifestation is not the only manifestation, there is also an invisible manifestation of himself to the faith. And furthermore, while there is one future manifestation that will be visible and personal there is also a present revelation or manifestation of himself in the present term.

So he doesn’t deny the visible and future manifestation, he just says there is another coming, there is another manifestation. And that one is an invisible manifestation of himself in the immediate future. Now this is, I think, confirmed also by the fact that the term used for manifestation here is a term that ordinarily means to make visible. So, “How is it that you will make yourself visible unto us and not unto the world?” He has, you see, misunderstood the exact nature of our Lord’s manifestation.

Well let’s look at the answer, specifically. He begins in verse 23 by saying to Judas, we read in the text, “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words.” Let me stop right there for just a moment because that is the condition for this manifestation about which he is speaking. “If a man love me, he will keep my

words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” So you can see that right at the beginning that the condition for the manifestation of himself in the immediate future in this invisible way is loving him. “If a man love me he will keep my words and we will manifest ourselves to him.”

So we have an interesting change here, don’t we? He says, “If a man love me, he will keep my commandments. And if he keeps my commandments, we will manifest ourselves to him.” Now I find that rather interesting because there are people who want to in the Christian life separate the love of Jesus Christ from salvation. They like to think that it is possible for a person to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and have no real love for him. That is, love that is determined by obedience. They tend to think that it is possible for a person to be a Christian and not really pay much attention to the commandment that the Lord Jesus had asked.

Now you can see that our Lord would be very much disturbed by that kind of doctrine. It’s not surprising that we have in the evangelical world today some who are playing fast and loose with our Lord’s commandments. They’re inclined to think that if they believe in Jesus Christ -- I should put that in quotes because there is a belief that is not genuine belief, and that’s the kind of belief that does not result in any change of life -- but they seem to think that a person can quote believe unquote and be saved but live a very ungodly life.

Now listen to what our Lord is saying, “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” Oh, but you say love is not the same as faith. To have faith in Christ is one level and to love him is something else. To have faith in him is to be saved, to love him is to be sanctified. Well I remind you that the Bible does not speak that way. The Apostle Paul says, “If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.” Let him come under the curse.

So, you see, everyone who is a true believer in Jesus Christ truly loves him. Now we’re not trying to say that every believer once he comes to know Christ and comes to

love him that he will always please him in every thing. It is true we are not sanctified yet we’re still here. That’s why we’re still here, one of the major reasons, we are not sanctified yet. But it is very imperative for us to see that the apostle says, giving the words of our Lord, “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” It’s almost like falling in love, I believe. When you fall in love, if you’ve ever been in love you know that one of the first feelings or dispositions or impressions or, I’m not sure how to say, one of the first -- I’m using the term feeling and I don’t want to use feeling -- one of the first -- well emotion, that’s really feeling -- one of the first things that grips you is the desire to please the one that you love. Now you may not please them perfectly, in fact the chances are you will never please the one you love perfectly. But nevertheless, that is one of the first things that grips you, I want to please this person. You’re walking along happily in life and everything is going fine until suddenly you look into the eyes of some young maiden and everything in you turns to jelly [Laughter].

And suddenly there comes this thing that grips you, well I would love to please her because I would love to have her as my wife. The idea of loving someone and never desiring to please them, to do the things that please them, would be incongruous to us. That’s not love. True love desires to please since you want to obey in that sense. Now, of course, that’s a human illustration, an obedience is really something that belongs more to the female side than the male side if we want to speak totally biblically. But this is just an illustration. “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” That’s the test of love for Christ, and love for Christ is the inevitable attitude that the saint has toward him. And if any man not love I, Lord Jesus Christ, he doesn’t belong to the church of Jesus Christ.

Now, when he displeases him, as he will displease him for we’re not saying that he believers perfectly, of course, when he displeases him he will do like Peter, he will go out and weep bitterly. And if he doesn’t weep bitterly he will feel like weeping bitterly because he has displeased his Lord. And if you are a true Christian and you have ever displeased the Lord by something that you have done that is one of the first dispositions

that comes over you. You are disturbed and upset because you have displeased him. And you want to get it set right and so you confess your sin to him.

So he says, “If any man love me, he will keep my words.” We should not fool ourselves into thinking that becoming a Christian is raising ones hand in the meeting, coming down front, making a profession of faith with our lips, thinking that perhaps we can quote believe unquote but we may have just as we have been living before. That is not salvation. A salvation that does not save us from sin is not a biblical salvation. Please remember that, my dear Christian friends. And it’s perfectly proper for you to test your own Christian faith by your obedience to words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now having given the condition for this manifestation he speaks of the consequences of it. He says, “If a man love me he will keep my words and my Father will love him.” He will have the love of the Father. Now, of course, the love of the Father is something that we cannot fully comprehend. I don’t want to suggest that if he keeps the words of our Lord Jesus Christ because he loves them that he will know the Father’s love in its fullness. You can know the waters of the spring without understanding fully the origin of it. You can take your little cup and take some of the water and thoroughly enjoy the coolness and the refreshment of the water without understanding where the water came from. And so when he says that the Father will love him he does not mean he will understand all of the Father’s love. He goes on secondly to say that there will be a united indwelling and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. Now here is the coming that our Lord referred to, “I will manifest myself to you.” See, verse 21 said, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and we will manifest ourselves to him.” And so the manifestation of the Father and the Son to us is that they come to us and they make our abode with us.

What does that mean? Well that means that the Godhead indwells us. Now isn’t that amazing? It’s not simply the Holy Spirit who indwells us but it’s the Father and the

Son as well who indwell us. The Triune God indwells us. When you study the indwelling of man by God through the Bible there is a definite development in the stages of it in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament we have references made to relationships of Christians to the Lord such as Enoch. Enoch walked with God. Noah walked with God. Abraham was the friend of God. Jacob in Genesis chapter 28, and verse 15 and verse 16, is said to have had a particular relationship to him. We read, “And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.” So God is with Jacob. He is with Joseph. He is with Moses. In the tabernacle he came and drove over the tabernacle in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, token of the fact that he dwelt with the people of God. That was all designed to illustrate what would ultimately take place in fullness. When the Lord Jesus Christ came, a new stage in the development of the doctrine of indwelling took place because there we read in this same Gospel of John, “And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” There we have the perfect indwelling of God, in our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God.

And then in the church age, that’s the present time, there is this special relationship made possible now by the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In 2nd Corinthians chapter 6, in verse 16, the apostle writes, “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Notice those words, “I will dwell in them, and I will walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people,” so that the end of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus is the permanent indwelling of God in the believer’s life. That was not possible in the Old Testament times because the redemptive work had not yet taken place. The Lord Jesus himself says, or rather John himself interpreting the words of the Lord Jesus in John chapter 7 says, “The Holy Spirit hath not yet been given because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” The Lord Jesus in the first chapter of the Book of Acts referred to the coming



of the Holy Spirit in the fullness of his permanent indwelling of the saints taking place on the day of Pentecost and there the Apostle Paul speaks of us as being, “A holy temple in the Lord,” in Ephesians 2, in verse 22.

I’ve gathered together some of the relationships that the Bible uses to express our relationship to the Father and to the Holy Spirit and to the Son. We are said to have the Lord Jesus with us in Matthew chapter 28, in verse 20. “Lo, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” He is said to be above us in Ephesians chapter 1, verse 20 and 21. He is said to be beneath us in Deuteronomy chapter 33, in verse 27. He is said to be before us in John 10, verse 4. In the Old Testament he is said to be behind us, protecting us from those that might pursue after to us, to use military metaphors. He is said, also, to be around us, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about us and delivers us.” And now in the New Testament we are told that he is within us as we read in verse 17, “But ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

Now that is the greatest expression of the relationship of God to us by virtue of the cross work of Jesus Christ. Isn’t that a tremendous relationship to have with God? The triune God actually indwells us. Think of it. Wherever you go the triune God is with the saints. Whatever we say the triune God is there with us. It is one of the most magnificent accomplishments of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus, to make it possible for the holy God to indwell unholy people. What a poor place we have to offer him for his love. What a shabby place to dwell in.

Now, of course, the Lord Jesus when he was observing the last Passover with the saints obtained an upper room and, I’m sure, considering who it was that that was a very shabby place to observe the last Passover and the first Lord’s Supper with the apostles. But it is an expression of what he determines to do that he chose that place, he used that place, he was with those apostles, and he observed the last Passover and first Lord’s Supper with them. So if our thoughts should make us think, “How would he ever indwell such a person as I am?” Remember, it is by his grace that he does. When he saw

Zacchaeus and what solid person Zacchaeus was. He was rich, the Bible says he was rich but he was rich in every way but the right way to be rich and yet the Lord Jesus said, “Zacchaeus, come down from that tree, I want you to go home and we’ll spend the night with you.” He didn’t even wait for an invitation, demanded it. So he went home to that sinner’s home and there dwelt with him. I think it’s a beautiful picture of how he deems to indwell us.

I read a story of a missionary who was on a foreign field and he was out from one of the central cities in a little village. It was customary for the governor to make occasional visits to the village and he would usually bring his retinue of servants with him and officials, and there was hardly any place in the village in which the governor could stay except the missionary’s own house. And so when the governor came the missionary, he said that he lent his home to the governor and he would go out and live either with someone else or put up a tent. And he said when the governor came he invited him to come to his own house and he went to his own house and the governor gave this lavish banquet kind of meal in his own home and he spoke of how he enjoyed it. Well that’s an illustration of what happens when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to indwell the saints. It’s like the triune God having a banquet to which we are invited in our own shabby little room. What a magnificent thought, that the triune God makes their abode with us. It is their manifestation of themselves to us.

Now the 24th verse speaks of the hindrance to the manifestation and it’s all on the negative side, “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.” So included is the solemn thought, he first says that, “Those that love me keep my commandments,” and so now the negative side, “If the person does not love me he does not keep my sayings.” Now he says, “The word that you hear is not mine, but it is the Father’s who sent me.” So in other words he is claiming, “What I am telling you is not simply my word.” Surely the apostles at this time did not have the fullness of the understanding of the major of the Lord Jesus that

they later had. So he assures them that the word that he is speaking to them is the word of God the Father. That is designed to create a further stance of the authority of what he is saying. “So the word that I speak to you is not my word, but it is the Father’s word who sent me.” And all the more reason that we should respond to the things that he’s been speaking about.

By the way, would you notice here that there seem to be only two conditions; loving him, not loving him. He does not say anything about anyone who has been different. He does not say there are three kinds of people; those who love me, those who do not love me, and those who don’t know exactly where they stand. You see, it is either you love him or you do not love him. Now the reason for that is that we either have faith in him or we do not have faith in him. There is no such thing as being indifferent to the words of holy Scripture. The reason that there is no such thing as indifference is that our Lord makes these outlandish claims for himself and consequently you cannot be indifferent. You either accept him or you reject him because his claims are so strong that to be indifferent is to call him a liar. If he says, “I’m the Son of God,” you can receive him as the Son of God, you may reject him as the Son of God, but you cannot say, “I will be indifferent,” because he has already made his claim that he’s the Son of God, and if you do not accept his claim you are actually responding negatively to him. So there is no such thing as indifference. There is no such thing as a middle ground. You cannot say now, “I see one or two of the elders who love the Lord, it’s obvious, and I see some of the other saints that loved the Lord, and I see some that do not love the Lord, and I’ll kind of stand on middle ground till I make up my mind.” No, there is no such middle ground. You either love him or you do not love him.

Now let me say just a few words by way of conclusion. You can see that the blessedness of this united indwelling in the mind of the triune God is tremendous. What should it lead to? Well I think it should lead to worship, of course. Do you often get down by your bedside and do you give thanks to God for the spiritual blessings that are

yours? Is it possible you attend Believers Chapel and never bow on your knees before the Lord? I hope not. Is it possible that there is no real expression of your fellowship with God in words in your closet? This shall lead to worship, fellowship, and it will lead to instruction and guidance.

Andrew Murray was a great Calvinistic, devotional Bible teacher from South Africa. I guess that is putting all of the disagreeable things together, isn't it? Calvinistic, devotional Bible teacher from South Africa [laughter], but he was a great man of God. And he made a great deal over the practice of the presence of God. And he spoke about our having to learn to tremble in the presence of this wondrous mystery that we are the habitation of God. What difference it would make if we all went home tonight and when the time came for us to fall into the bed or why wait until then, get down by the bedside and go over some of these things, giving thanks for what God has done for you. You know, one of the best ways to read the Bible is on your knees, too. Not good for your knees [laughter] but it's one of the best ways to read the Bible. Read it, pray, asking God to illuminate the words of Scripture as you read them. I don't know where that came from [laughter].

This truth of the indwelling is expressed, I think, by the Apostle Paul most intimately in a passage in 1st Corinthians and I'm going to ask you to turn there as I close the message tonight. 1st Corinthians chapter 6, and verse 17, here we read, “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” Here is the short sentence of ten English words yet I think it suggests to us the highest possible unity between the disciple and his Lord.

There are many other things that are used in the New Testament to express our identification with the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, we are told that we are sheep and he's the shepherd. That reminds us of our relationship to him. We are part of his flock, the sheep may wonder from the shepherd. It's not a perfect metaphor of our relationship to the Lord. Now, furthermore, we are told that we are branches and we are in the vine. But we can conceive of a branch being cut off from the vine. We are told that we are

members of a body and the body is the body of Christ. But we know that a member may, sometimes must, be severed from the body. We know that we are part of the family of God but a child may be alienated from a father. But now, when two spirits become one spirit how can you part one spirit? You cannot. And so he says, “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” What a magnificent expression of the union and mutual indwelling that takes place when a person believes in Jesus Christ.

When Israel went through the wilderness and as they carried on the ministry that God intended them to carry on in the Old Testament their life was regulated and dominated by the presence of God in the temple. Every activity of that nation ultimately related to the presence of the cloud over the temple in the daytime and the pillar of fire at night. If the cloud moved, they were to move. If the fire moved, they were to move. If the fire stayed still they were to stay still because if when the cloud moved they did not move they became dark; darkness began to surround them. If they moved out when the cloud had not yet moved they moved out into darkness. And furthermore, they had no assurance of the presence of God with them, so their life was dominated and regulated and every activity, ultimately, was related to the presence of God in the temple.

Now we’re told in the New Testament we are the temple of God. The church as a body and every individual is the temple of God. And, of course, the lesson is plain; our lives are to be dominated, regulated, by the presence of our Lord in this temple. May God help us to meditate upon this glorious truth. And by his grace allow him to have the control over us that means obedience to the words of our Lord. Let’s bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these wonderful expressions of the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ for his disciples. Oh God, may the love that we have for him be expressed in the desire to please him, to be obedient to him. Many of us, Lord, have his commandments and we want truly to keep them. So enable us to keep his

commandments out of love for him. And help us to realize the tremendous blessing that is ours now in the permanent indwelling of the triune God through the Spirit. Lead us Lord truly to seek Thy presence. May our prayer life become more vibrant with life and vitality. May our reading of the holy Scriptures be more significant. And may also...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**