



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 7:1-13

"Before the Feast of the Tabernacle"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] This morning we are turning, as usual, to the Gospel of John and we are looking now at the opening part of the 7th chapter reading verses 1 through 13 for our Scripture reading. And so if you have a New Testament or a Bible with you, turn with me to chapter and we'll begin with the 1st verse. Remember that in the 6th chapter the Lord Jesus had performed two mighty signs, and that had followed with conversation with the Jews over some of the leading spiritual principles that were found within it as a result of some of the words the Lord spoke concerning the sovereignty of God. Many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. The Lord Jesus turned to the twelve and asked them, "Will ye also go away?" And Peter had replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." And Jesus just reminded Peter that while it's true that they were going to stick with him, nevertheless not all of them would. He reminded Peter that one of the ones who he had chosen was a devil. And of course he was speaking of Judas Iscariot. Now, in the 7th chapter John writes,

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jew's feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren

therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. (By the way, the expression "his brethren" refers to his physical brethren, the brothers who were the sons of Mary and Joseph. Verse 4.) For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. (Now, notice the expression as "my time," not "mine hour" has not yet come, but my time, my season, my opportunity.) The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not unto this feast: for my time is not yet come. (Now, if you have an Authorized Version, as I have before me, you've noticed that I've left out the first "yet" in verse 8. "I go not up yet." The reason for that is that probably the text should read here, "I go not up unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come.") When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. (From this I think we learn the meaning of the statement in verse 8, "I am not going up to this feast." He means he's not going up to it now, and he's not going up to it in the sense in which the brethren had asked him to, to go up publicly and demonstrate his Messiahship by his mighty works.) Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews."

May God bless this, his inspired word. Our subject this morning in the exposition of the Gospel of John is "Before the Feast of Tabernacles Rising Hostility." With the 7th chapter of the gospel a new section of John begins. And in the opening verses of the 7th chapter the apostle describes some events that occurred just before the feast of the tabernacles. The rest of chapters 7 and 8 have to do with things that transpired during

that great Jewish feast of the tabernacles. So that during the feast and on and after the last day of the feast make up the remainder of the section of John's 7th and 8th chapters.

Most readers of John chapter 7 do not find in John chapter 7 the interesting and intriguing things that they find in chapter 6, but it is nevertheless a masterly piece of writing. Many warnings against the prevalent ills of the Christian church are found here. For example, in the encouragement that the brothers of the Lord Jesus made to him that he should go up to Jerusalem and manifest himself to the world, and thus individuals would respond to him and to his Messiahship illustrates one of the banes of the modern church, and that is its worldly policy.

If there is one thing that characterizes professing evangelicalism today it is the tendency to worldly policy. Someone wrote in a rather semi-liberal exposition of the Gospel of John that some would-be prophets of our day and not a few of the confident planners have no faith at all in the still small voice, the fire, the earthquake, and the mighty rushing wind. These are what tell and impress and gain results. One thing that has impressed me is the fact that our politics, our sociology, our other fads and trends have made a great impact on the doctrines of the Christian church, so far as its professing testimony is concerned. Today we have the church in many cases in a mild uproar over the place of women. Now, the reason that this has happened is largely traceable to the uproar that has taken place over the place of women in society. But the place of women in society should not, it would seem, have any real impact on what the Scriptures say about the place of women in the church. But, of course, we know that that is not true. And so consequently the church is torn and disturbed over the place of women in the church, largely because the church is now listening to the fads and trends of the time.

This is especially true in the relationship of homosexuality to biblical doctrine. Now, no one would ever have thought that the Christian church could read the Old Testament and the New Testament and not come to the conviction that homosexuality was a sin. That was the obvious teaching of the Old Testament. It is the obvious

teaching of the New Testament and has been for nineteen hundred years. But today things are different. We are seeing some of the large professing Christian organizations and denominations torn in two over the role of homosexuals. Not simply the role of homosexuals in church membership and whether they should be members of a church in good standing, but now over the role of homosexuals in the ministry of the church. And we have the instance in more than one place of the ordination of homosexuals for the ministry of the word of God supposedly in the Christian church.

Now, why and how is such a thing possible? Well in recent years we are told biblical scholars have but forward new understanding of those passages most often cited to condemn homosexuality. What are these new interpretations? Well there have been some attempts, naturally. Some have clearly seen that if we are going to make a place for homosexual ministry then we must deal with the passages of the Bible that so plainly teach otherwise. But I think if anyone would read the interpretations that are put upon those passages he would see that it is manifestly an attempt to make the Bible conform to the social practices of our day. What we are seeing, it seems to me, is very plainly the church influenced by the trends and fads and movements of our day.

Now, that was the same principle that moved the brethren of our Lord to suggest that he should go to Jerusalem and manifest himself, because that's the way you do things. You do things through public relations. And if you go to the city of Jerusalem and perform your miracles there in headquarters, they will, of course respond to you. There are many other ways in which this manifests itself. The church's relationship to money is another. In the Christian church today we do not follow the biblical principles of money but rather we follow the principles of the present day. If a movement of if a man becomes financially in peril, then the thing to do is to send out a prayer letter, an appeal to the believers to give money in order that the work may not go under. In Bible times it was not so. In Bible times, so far as I can tell from the teaching of the New Testament, no one ever made an appeal for money for himself. It was perfectly all right

to appeal for money for the poor saints in Jerusalem because those who made the appeal were not the poor saints in Jerusalem. The apostles and others freely felt that they could call upon the saints to give for others. But to give for themselves, so far as I can tell not only does the New Testament not record anything like that, but the whole spirit of the Bible is opposed to that. In fact John the Apostle puts it very vividly, that we should "go forth taking nothing of the Gentiles." In other words, our appeal is to be to the Lord and in appealing to the Lord we have a wonderful test of whether we are doing the Lord's work or not.

Now, in yesterday's paper here in Dallas some illustrations were given of this in three of three well known men and movements. When they got into financial problems the things that they did were predictable. They sent out letters in appeal for funds. And the individuals to whom the letters were sent, not realizing the teaching of the word of God, yielded to the exhortation and the appeals that were made to them and responded and got them out of their difficulties one more time. It's very characteristic and predominant in the lives of individuals who are influenced by the world to use worldly methods in order to carry on the Lord's work. I still believe with all my heart that if we look to the Lord for the supply of the funds necessary to carry out his work, we will have a very good test of just how much our work is in the will of God. George Herbert, who was no outstanding Christian once said, "Money, thou bane of bliss and source of woe." And we see that so vividly in the Christian church. But I know my words won't count for anything, because you'll go out and do the same thing you've been doing all along. Somebody will send you an appeal, and you'll respond to that appeal. Why? I don't know why, but we just do not pay attention to what the Scriptures teach any longer it would seem.

There is another thing that appears here that I think is very important, and that is those within the church accused Jesus Christ of deception. It is no new evil for men to differ over Jesus Christ, and it's no new evil for men to differ over Jesus Christ and over

the Scriptures in the very bosom of the church of Jesus Christ. And right in Jerusalem where headquarters of the movement of God was ostensibly and outwardly men differed over the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Piety and the fear of God are not always outstanding in the chief places of the church," one of the old commentators has said. That is so wonderfully illustrated here, that it ought to warn us that piety and the fear of God are not necessarily to be found in what we think are the important places of evangelical ministry of the word of God.

There is another thing that is, I think, outstanding about this passage. And that is men refuse him out of the closest of relationships to him. Here are the brothers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many who read the word of God together with him in their youth now think that he is nothing more than a Messianic pretender of sorts who has been able to perform mighty miracles. They have an understanding and appreciation of his power to perform miracles. But as John says, "They were not believers in him." Isn't it an amazing thing when you think about it, that these individuals grew up under the same roof with the Lord Jesus Christ but they did not believe in him? It is possible for us to have the closest familiarity with the Lord Jesus and not really know him. It's possible for you to sit in Believers Chapel and not know him. It's possible for you young people to grow up in Believers Chapel, to grow up in a Christian family with a Christian father and a Christian mother and not know the Lord Jesus Christ in a saving way. How important it is that we lay hold ourselves of the salvation that exists in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can never say, "He is a Christian. His father and mother are Christians. They attend Believers Chapel." Or they attend some other evangelical church, and they've been brought up in that environment and can speak the language as these brethren of the Lord Jesus were able to do.

I think it's also interesting to notice that though imposters exist within the professing body of believers, there are always, it seems, some right thinking believers in the midst of the confusion and chaos that characterizes Christian activity. And confusion

and chaos characterized the days of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, there are those who refused him because of prejudice, but later on in the chapter we shall deal with that. People today do think, because they're prejudiced against Christianity that the Bible cannot really say anything to us. That Christianity is really an irrelevancy. For a person to be concerned over the state of his soul is somewhat pathological, is it not? All of these things, this rather insignificant sounding and looking passage speaks to us.

The chapter begins with the words, "After these things." Six months, roughly, after the events of the preceding chapter, for that was the period of time between the Feast of the Passover around which the other events were gathered and the Feast of the Tabernacles. What happened in between is not given us in the Gospel of John, which illustrates the fact that John is not giving us a life or a biography of the Lord Jesus. Actually, none of the gospel writers do that. They write gospels, not biographies. And so they are very selective, as a rule, in the things in our Lord's ministry which they use in their gospels. The intervening period of time is found described for us in Mark chapters 7, 8, and 9. And it appears that the Lord Jesus for the six months engaged in what might be called an itinerate ministry like a local rabbi's itinerate ministry. "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." So he engaged in ministry, an itinerate ministry, in the northern part of the land.

That's the introduction to the chapter. One thing I think this illustrates for us is the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was a very prudent man naturally. "We must always beware," some has said, "that we do not for the sake of life lose the purpose of living." And our Lord did not rush pale male to Jerusalem again when he knew they were seeking to kill him, because he had a purpose for living, and he was following the directions that the Father had given him. And his hour had not yet come. And so he engaged in the itinerate ministry in the mean time. It is important for us to realize in the mean time that we should not fail to use our reason, which has been given to us under the direction of the Holy Spirit simply because we are believers.

Well the occasion of the events is described in the second verse. "Now the Jew's feast of tabernacles was at hand." This was a very interesting feast. It usually occurred, or was supposed to occur, in what is our month of October. It was a harvest thanksgiving feast primarily. It was designed to celebrate the wilderness blessings that the Lord had given to the nation Israel. These things had become attached to it. And so at that time they celebrated the way in which God brought them through their wilderness experience in the past. And so they had a libation every morning. The water was poured out in a ceremony to celebrate the fact that when they were thirsty and had no water, God supplied them with water. And then in the evening they would light the candelabra in testimony to the fact that God guided them through the wilderness with the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. It was also, of course, a time at which people came from all over the land, and in fact all over the Easter world to celebrate it. And so it was called the Feast of Tabernacles, because they made little booths out of boughs off of trees and shrubbery and lived in these little booths like so many tents. It reminds of the camp meetings that Christians used to hold in the south in the earlier part of this century. So it was a kind of a Jewish camping festival, Goodspeed says. But if we call it a Jewish camping festival we lose sight of the fact that it had an important spiritual significance. Ultimately it pointed on to the day of the future when the nation Israel should be gathered together in the land for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in the kingdom.

Well, the brethren of our Lord, because they were going up to Jerusalem to celebrate this feast, knowing that he too would most likely go up, came to him and said, "Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world." Now that is imminently rational advice. If you are manifesting yourself to the world, do you do that by hiding? Is it not to be expected if you are going to manifest yourself to the world you

should go up where the world is and there perform some of your miracles. And in performing some of your miracles they will come to the conviction that you are truly the Messiah. Furthermore, Jesus, they might have said to him, "Do you not remember that six months ago when you were there you spoke some rather hard words about sovereign sovereignty. Something that Dr. Johnson will later speak about in Believers Chapel. [Laughter] And it upset quite a few of the people, because many of your disciples went back and walked no more with you, do you remember? And so if you go back now and perform some miracles you can probably also not only gain recognition as a Messianic possibility, but also you can get some of your disciples back who used to follow you but who are not following you now, because you're preaching the doctrine of sovereign sovereignty." It would have made imminent good sense. The only thing is that it was not in accordance with the will of God for the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's so easy to rationalize and to make things that are wrong appear, not only to be right, but most reasonably right. How important it is that we have good theology. "Shew yourself to the world." It was a worldly suggestion. Go up to the headquarters of religion today; let them pass judgment on you. Now, what made it even more difficult to deal with is the fact that it was true in one sense. He is to manifest himself ultimately in Jerusalem. That's the place that the Messianic possibilities should manifest themselves. The Messiah is to be seen as the Messiah particularly in Jerusalem, as the final testimony of it. But Jesus said, "I do not receive honor from men." That's a statement that he's already made.

Now, the brethren, of course, believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ. And John traces their worldly reasoning to their unbelief. He says in the 5th verse, "For," this is why they said this, "neither did his brethren believe in him." Now I, it seems to me, this passage teaches about as clearly as any other passage could teach that carnal relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely worthless so far as eternal life is concerned. Now you and I, of course, do not have the possibility of the fleshly relationship to him that his own

brethren had. But it's obvious that we may have a very close relationship to people who are related to him. All of those relationships Jesus Christ disowns in so far as eternal life is concerned.

One day he was preaching and in the midst of his preaching someone blurted out, "Blessed is the womb that bear Thee, and the breasts that Thou didst suck." In other words, blessed is the mother who gave birth to you and upon whose breast you were nurtured. The Lord Jesus said, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God." In other words, he denied the earthly relationship; the fleshly relationship in so far as spiritual blessing was concerned, and acknowledged that that came through hearing the word of God. One can see that when large church organizations appeal rationalistically to pray through the mother of our Lord. For she has great influence upon him. How far that thinking is from the thinking of the apostles, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God." Now we do not in any way denigrate the Virgin Mary. She was a godly woman. And her godliness is expressed most imminently when she said that her soul rejoiced in God her Savior. "And whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

Now, I say it was a very reasonable kind of request. The Lord Jesus deals with it very abruptly. In the 6th verse through the 9th verse he gives his reasons for refusing to go at this time. Then Jesus said unto them, "My time is not yet come." Now notice he does not say, "Mine hour," that usually is a reference to the cross. This, however, is his time to go up for the Feast of Tabernacles. My time has not yet come, the word that is used here is the Greek expression *kairos*, which means something like opportunity or season. The other word hour is the Greek word *hora*, which means "hour." So my time, my season, my opportunity to go up has not yet come, but your time is always ready. What did he mean by that? Why I think the simplest understanding of this is that he meant you may always go up to Jerusalem without any fear of any difficulty, because you are of the world. And the world, as he will say later, the world loves its own. But I'm not of the world. In fact, the world hates me. And therefore I must use prudence and be

sure that I go up at the beck and call of my Father in heaven. My time, my season, my opportunity has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth. That tells you a great deal about the attitude of the world to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was hated by the world.

Now, later on in this gospel he will go into more detail about this. He will say he was actually hated by the world. And furthermore he will say that all of his disciples may expect to be hated by the world. If we are never hated by the world, one has good reason to say, "Am I really a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ in the way that he would have me to be a disciple of him? How is it that the world loves me, but it hates the one whom I'm supposed to represent?" Me, it hates. Now, isn't it striking that in spite of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was hated, he was at perfect peace. Later on he will speak about his peace. He will say that he conveys his peace to them. He gives his peace to them, and in the midst of it all he feels at perfect peace even with the world. Why is this? How is it that an individual can be so hated by the world and yet at the same time in such peace? Why, I have some friends that cannot be really happy if one of their friends is saying things about them that upset them. They find it very difficult to be at peace. The Lord Jesus Christ was assailed constantly, but he was in perfect peace.

A few years ago I read of a great and good man who was assailed in his public life from some quarters by ferocious persistence of misrepresentation and dislike that was nothing short of venomous. So much so that finally an individual asked this man, "How is that you can stand these criticisms that men falsely bring concerning you?" He said, "I'm happy at home, and given that a man can face anything." Well, I think that's true. When a man is perchance standing for something that is right and he is assailed for it, if he is happy at home he can find a place of peace. The Lord Jesus was happy at home. Now, he was not happy at home such as you and I might be happy at home. We might be assailed by people out in the world, and we go home to our husbands or to our wives and our children, and there we have a respite. We have a place where we are happy. I

do appreciate that. I have such a place. But Jesus did not even have that. He had not where he could lay his head. Where was his home? Why his home was in heaven. He was happy at home, because he was in right relationship with his Father. That's the ultimate happiness. That's the happiness that will sustain us in all of the experiences of life, to be right with him.

Now then, his journey to Jerusalem is described in the final words. After he has said to them, "You go on up to the feast. I am not going to this feast." He means I am not in process of doing it now and particularly as you want me to do with those motives. "My time has not yet come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee." He did not go. But when his brethren were gone up, and usually they went up in crowds, and so the great crowds went up. He also went up unto the feast, not openly, not in manifestation. And in fact the adverb that's used to describe our Lord's going up, not manifestly, is derived from the same root of this exhortation that they addressed to him, "Show thyself to the world." So he specifically reversed the advice that they gave to him and did not do what they suggested; it was a worldly suggestion. He went up not openly but as it were, in secret. Then the Jews sought him at the feast. They expected Jesus to be there. They knew he was a person who observed the feasts and observed the Law of Moses, and so they looked about for him. And they were saying, "Where is he?" And there was a great deal of murmuring among the people.

Now, that word usually mean murmuring in a bad sense of complaining against God. But in this case it most likely refers to quiet discussion. In other words, they were discussing the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to the things that were happening in the land. It was quiet discussion on the street corners and perhaps in what were the cafes and restaurants of the time. And they kept their conversation on a rather mild level because of fear of the authorities. Isn't it interesting that in the discussion some were saying he's a good man. Others were saying, "No, he deceiveth the people." Oh the peril of poor theology. Here were individuals who were aware of his character but unaware of

his nature. They knew him for what he was outwardly. They knew him as a good man. But they had not yet grasped the fact that he was not only a good man, but he was the divine Son of God. You see, theology really does count. Ultimately our lives depend on theology. They had a good understanding of the effects of our Lord's ministry among the people, but they had not yet come to grasp who he was.

And today there are people just like that. I think there are some like that in Believers Chapel. And there are some perhaps here today like that. They think of the Lord Jesus Christ as a good man, but they are not really aware of the fact that he was not simply a good man, but the divine Son of God. And I want to say to you with all of the urgency that I can, if you do not come to know him as the divine Son of God, you may pass from this earthly existence out into separation from the triune God. Come to Christ. Come to him who is the divine Son of God and rest yourself upon him.

There are three significant lessons. I'll just mention them, because our time is really up. Proximity to Jesus Christ does not preclude perishing. In verse 7 we read, "The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth." It's not enough to be a human being in order to be saved. In verse 12 we read, "And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people." It's not enough to have the proper nationality to have Christ. And finally in verse 5 we read, "For neither did his brethren believe in him." It's not enough to have membership in the family physically to have Christ. It isn't enough to be a human being. It isn't enough to be a member of a particular nationality. It isn't enough to be a member of a particular church, as Israel was. It's not enough to be related to him in a personal physical way. Proximity to Jesus Christ may be the place from which men proceed to hell fire.

One thief on the cross right by his side heard the Lord Jesus say to him, "Today, thou shalt be with me in paradise." The other thief passed from the side of Christ, the very side physically of the Lord Jesus into eternal separation from God. To one of the

thieves he said, "Thou shall be with me in paradise today." That's the refutation of sacramentalism, for he didn't have time to be baptized. It's the refutation of purgatory, because he said, "Today thou shall be with me in paradise." It's the refutation of universalism. He did not say, "Today ye shall be with me in paradise," but "Today thou," the believing thief, "Thou shall be with me in paradise." It's the best illustration I know of "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling." That's all the dying thief had, the Lord Jesus Christ in his saving word."

Secondly, religion without personal faith brings ruin. Here are individuals, the brethren, who believed in his power to perform mighty works but they were lost. Religion without personal faith is useless. And finally, impact with deity brings conflict in humanity. I know it's very distasteful to people to hear words like these that I'm going to read. But they are the words of Jesus Christ. This is what he said, "I am come to send fire on the fire. And what will I, if it be already kindled? I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished. Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, No, but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother." Now the last two illustrations we can understand, because they happen constantly, "The mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law," but for different reasons. Jesus said, "I have not come to bring peace on the earth, I have come to bring division."

The words of Jesus Christ and salvation through him ought to ultimately divide men one from another. The Apostle Paul said, "We the apostles are a savor of life unto life, and of death unto death." For those who are on the way to perishing, we are death unto death. For those who are the way unto being saved, we are life unto life." The ministry of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a dividing thing. Oh may God deliver us from division to death. The two thieves illustrate it beautifully. Even the sun that shines

from heaven, shines on the plants illustrates it, for the branch that is not in living touch with the trunk is slain by the rays of the sun, while the branch in living vital union is helped by it. The same Sun that melts the butter hardens the clay, it has been said. Why is it that Jesus Christ divides men? Because of sin.

I read a story, which I had in my notes. I had completely forgotten it, about a man who preached the gospel among some English fishermen. His subject was justification and he was trying to make Christ's work on the cross clear and plain, and finally he asked the men the question, "Now will one of you tell me in your own words what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross?" And an old fisherman who had been deeply moved by the message, with some tears in his eyes looked up at the preacher and answered, "He swapped with me." Words that ultimately are explained by the penal substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our salvation is only in him.

One might ask the question, what happened to the brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, I wish I knew what happened to all of them. What about James and Joses, and Simon, and Judas who are mentioned specifically in Matthew 13 as the brothers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, we know they later came to faith in Jesus Christ, because Acts chapter 1 in verse 14 states as much. Of Joses, church tradition does not tell us anything else. Early Christian writers tell us that Simon became a devoted servant of the Lord Jesus for many years. James we know a great deal about, because James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. He was known as "Old Camel Knees" because supposedly he spent so much time in prayer that his knees were affected physically by it and looked like the knees of a camel. He became a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and when he wrote his book, the Epistle of James, he describes himself as, "James a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ." This man has come to faith in Christ and calls his own brother, the Lord Jesus Christ. And then there's Judas, or Jude as we know him, who wrote the Epistle of Jude. Jude describes himself also as a servant of Jesus Christ. And then in his book he

speaks about looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. He too came to understand the mercy of God in Christ. That's my prayer for you this morning.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent statements that the Apostle John has given to us. We thank Thee for the divisive power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because we know that Thou dost rejoice in the things that are pleasing to the triune God and exalt the name of the triune God. There are many things that we do understand, but Lord we pray if there should be some in this audience who have not come to faith in Christ, who like the world of Jesus' day have hated him. Oh God, deliver them from their sin and guilt and condemnation and hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ and bring them to repentance and faith and to the place where they look for the mercy of God through...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**