



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 5:1-11

"Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading this morning is in Romans chapter 5, verse 1 through verse 11, Romans chapter 5, verse 1 through verse 11. Now the apostle has just finished his exposition of the relationship of Abraham to the Doctrine of Justification which he has been propounding. And so we read in chapter 5, verse 1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now let me just say a word, some of you may have a version which does not have, "We have peace with God," but something that is slightly different, such as, "Continue at peace with God," and the reason for this is that there are two readings in the Greek text which have some support, and it is possible to accept one of the readings which may be rendered, "We have peace with God," as the Authorized Version that I'm reading has, or it's possible that the other reading, which means something like "let us go on having peace with God," is the proper reading, in which case this becomes an exhortation to enjoy the peace that we have. So if you have a version that has a slightly different reading at that point that's the reason for it.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The textural decision is very hard at this point but, fortunately, the meaning

is not affected greatly by it because it's obvious, this passage teaches that we have peace with God, and the passage also is an exhortation, includes an exhortation to enjoy the peace that we have. So we'll just leave it as it is, the great majority still of the commentators and even in the edited texts prefer the indicative, "We have peace with God," and so we will accept that for the purposes of this exposition. The apostle continues in verse 2,

"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

The 10th verse is largely a repetition of the preceding verse with this exception, that justification is now reconciliation. And that would seem to indicate that, in the mind of the apostle, these are two different ways of looking at the same thing. One our legal status before the Lord, we have been justified by the judge, the other; we have also become, by the grace of God, friends with God when we were at one time enemies of him. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved in his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation."

Some of you have an Authorized Version that has the word "atonement," at the end of verse 11. That is the only place in the New Testament where the word atonement is found. Atonement is an Old Testament word because it signifies essentially the covering over of sins, but in the New Testament, through the death of Jesus Christ, sins are not simply covered, but they are removed by the blood that was shed. So atonement has become, in New Testament times, simply a theological term to express everything that Christ did in his death. It's alright to speak of the Doctrine of the Atonement providing we mean it's the doctrine of what Christ accomplished in his death. The word itself is not found in the New Testament at all. I frequently have people write to me, after they've heard me say atonement and inform me of the fact that this is true, that the word atonement is not found in the New Testament. But it is a theological term like the trinity, and so it's perfectly alright to use it if you use it in that sense. The word, as you can see, is reconciliation, and the apostle does not say by whom we have now received the atonement, but by whom we have now received the reconciliation. The new position of friendship with the Lord God and it is received, you'll notice, because it is received in grace. May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[Prayer removed from audio]

[Message] The subject this morning in the exposition of the Epistle to the Romans is "Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment." One of the most common and most significant expressions in our society today is the expression "peace." What is "peace"? Paul talks about "peace with God?" But what is meant by "peace?" We know of "peace on earth," and it's something that we desire. We know of "peace in the home." We know of "peace of mind." But what is the "peace" of which Paul speaks?

Now when we think of "peace," we think of the things that our politicians constantly tell us. They tell us they are either "for peace," well; I've never known anyone

who didn't say that he was for peace. Everybody is for peace. We would love to have peace in our international relationships. There are very few who would like to have success of international wars, war following war. We all believe in "peace on earth." There's probably not one person here, or one person in this city, who would not want "peace on earth." It's probable that even those who sell munitions would much prefer to make their fortunes in another more pleasant way. But Paul talks about "peace with God." What does "peace with God" mean?

We all would like to have "peace in our homes." We know that we cannot live in a happy way in our home life if we do not have peace there. One of the commentators on the Epistle to the Colossians has spoken about the warden of a certain church guest house, who when visitors come to spend time there says, "Ladies and gentlemen, we have no set household regulations, but we have an orderly house." For when there is order in the house, there is usually happiness in the house. When a home is disorderly and there is no peace there, you can be sure it's not a very enjoyable home in which to live. So we all want "peace in the home." But "peace with God," what does Paul mean by that? Or "peace of mind," we're living in the day in which a great deal is made over "peace of mind." We would like to be peaceful. This same commentator has said, "We should like to feel like a fish in water, or a cat purring at the fireside, or like a father reading his paper and smoking his pipe after dinner." When we are surrounded by such an atmosphere of contentedness it's a sign that we have "peace of mind." But Paul seems to think that "peace with God" is far more significant. With him, what looms large is "peace with God."

Now "peace with God" is something that is, above all, of the physical contentedness that we might associate with the term "peace." "Peace" is what we obtain through the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus, himself, spoke about peace. He said, "My peace, I leave with you. You're going to have tribulations in the world, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. And I am able to bestow

peace." Now with Paul, it's quite clear that peace is associated with a right relationship with the Lord God. "Peace with God" is the result of reconciliation with God. "Peace with God" is the result of justification by the Lord God. In other words, the trial is over and judgment has been given in our favor. Some of the greatest of the saints have placed the greatest significance on "peace with God."

Think of Augustine, for example, and think of the setting of the famous Eighth book of *The Confessions*, when he was wrestling with the truth of holy Scripture, and in the climatic point of his conversion, he recalls, "Eagerly then I returned to the place where I had laid the volume of the apostle." And, as you know, he turned to Romans chapter 13, and from the text there, obtained the peace that Paul speaks about, a "peace with God."

For Luther, Romans proved to be the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest gospel. And so this Augustinian monk, who had been so troubled by efforts to gain peace through his own activities, found it, ultimately, in the Gospel of the Apostle Paul. He speaks of the terror with which he thought of God, and how he thought that the only way in which it was possible for a man to be justified before God was by penance, by seeking to obtain the merit, the favor, of God by the works that he performed. And he thought of God, he said, "As a stern judge sitting on a rainbow, waiting to hurl thunder bolts of judgment at us." He even misunderstood what the Bible had to say about the righteousness of God. He thought the "righteousness of God" was the righteousness which he exercised when he judged us. And from reading, probably the 71st Psalm, he came to understand that the "righteousness of God" was the righteousness that he bestowed upon men who believed in him, just like the "peace of God" is a peace that he bestows, and like the "wisdom of God" is the wisdom that he bestows upon men. So the righteousness of God is the righteousness that he bestows upon believers in Jesus Christ. And so he said, "The very same words that were, to me, such a terror before, became the

means by which I entered the gate of paradise and came to understand what it was to be justified."

John Wesley, one of the greatest of the Arminians, on May the 24th seventeen hundred and thirty-eight, found "peace with God." He was a very unusual man, Mr. Wesley. He, as you know, had been an Anglican minister. He had actually gone to the United States of America. He says to convert the Indians. He said, "I went to America to convert the Indians, but, O! Who shall convert me?" He came back, his mission a failure. He did not really know that Jesus Christ was his own personal savior. In 1738 after he had already been out to Georgia to convert the Indians, he entered into the peace of which the apostle speaks. He said that on that day, May the 24th seventeen hundred and thirty-eight, in the morning, he happened to open the Bible haphazardly and a text leapt out at him. "Thou art not very far from the Kingdom of God." It strangely reassured him. How far? Well, he was so near that that very evening, he entered into peace with God. He says in his journal, "In the evening I went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter to nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." That's really what Paul is talking about when he uses the term "peace." He's talking about a man entering into the greatest of all relationships, the relationship with the Lord God which brings him peace of conscious because of the guilt and penalty of sin.

Now the apostle has come to this place in the Epistle to the Colossians, and here in the 5th chapter he moves on to the certainty and enjoyment of the peace that we have. George Cutting, a Bible teacher of several generations ago, wrote a little pamphlet from which I have obtained the title to the sermon this morning. It's entitled "Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment," and I know that many of you have seen that little pamphlet because it's

still published and passed around by Christians. It's an attempt to set forth the way of salvation and also the way of assurance of salvation. It was the means of salvation of one English Queen.

Well that's what Paul speaks about here, "Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment." The believer can be safe, and he can be certain of it. He can be certain of it because of the tribulations of God. That seems strange, doesn't it, to be certain of your salvation because of the tribulations of God? Yes, that's what Paul says. You can also be certain of it because of the love of God. Well, that we would understand. And you can be certain of it because of the reconciliation of God.

You see that, at this point in the argument, the epistle has been setting forth the Doctrine of Justification by Faith and the question had been asked Paul, "Well Paul, if justification is then by faith, what is faith?" Paul said faith is the faith that Abram exercised. It's the faith which lays hold of a God who justifies men by virtue of the work of Jesus Christ. And furthermore, faith is faith in a God who calls the things that be not as though they were. Well, a natural objection would come at this point, "Well Paul is this method safe?" Faith is a very tenuous thing, to think, a person is saved by faith. You cannot put your finger on faith. It's something that seems very subjective. When the deeper experiences of life come, when a man falls into tribulation and trial, is faith going to hold in the midst of those trials? Is this method safe, really? Well now that's what the apostle will answer here in Romans chapter 5. And he will show this method is a safe method. And furthermore, it's not only a safe method, but actually the things that you are talking about are the things that strengthen the believer in the peace that he has by virtue of justification.

Now we look at it now and the apostle says, first of all, the believer is safe, and he can be sure of it because of the tribulations of God. He says, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." That's with reference to the past. Our past, having been covered by the blood of Christ, is now a past that is over for us. We have peace

with God. Not only that, he says, but "We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand." That's something that has to do with the present. We're able to approach this God and bring our petitions to him, for the way has been opened by our mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in him, we are able to approach the God of this universe.

Furthermore, Paul says, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." We can look forward to the future, and expect that we should ultimately experience, not only the approval or the affirmation of God, but really the glory of God itself. So the whole key to this, right here in the opening section, is the relationship that we have to the Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have peace.

Amos, in a very well known text, in the 3rd chapter of his prophesy, says, "Can two walk together unless they have made an appointment?" Well that, of course, is true. If we are going to be together, we frequently make an appointment, don't we? Men if you want to be with your wife, you say to your wife, "Well I'll meet you under the clock on the corner of Elm and Pacific," or whatever it may be, "and we'll meet there at 12:00." And so you're there at 12:00. And at 12:30, a quarter to one, she comes along. [Laughter] And you meet there because you have an appointment. Now the place where God meets with men and women is the cross of Jesus Christ. It is there that he meets with us and he says that those who come to the cross and meet with God there may expect to have the forgiveness of sins because there sin is paid for by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we have peace, and we have access, and we have hope.

Now in the light of it, Paul says we ought to be enjoying it and glorying in that fact. "Knowing," now here he gets to the real point of the section because evidently, the question of tribulations has been raised in the light of this rather tenuous way to be justified before God. He says not only do we, "Rejoice in hope of the glory of God, but we glory in tribulations also." Now we might argue that tribulations come from the Lord God, and therefore, we glory in them. They give occasion for the exhibition of his power

and the exhibition of his grace, for his strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Otherwise, we should have great impatience, but tribulation works patience.

There is a story about Mr. Robert Chapman that many preachers tell. It's been told many times. I'm sure that many of you have heard it. A young man came to Mr. Chapman, who was a well known Bible teacher, about a century ago, and asked Mr. Chapman to pray for him that he might learn patience. He was rather surprised when Mr. Chapman said, "All right let's pray right now." And so he looked toward God and closed his eyes, and said, "Oh Lord! Send this young man tribulation." And when he finished, the young man expostulated and said, "Mr. Chapman I was asking that you pray for patience." And he said, "I know but tribulation, that worketh patience." Reminds me of the Irishman who prayed, "Oh, God give me patience and give it to me right now." [Laughter] Well the means by which God gives us the patience that the Scriptures speak about is tribulation. "Tribulation worketh patience." And then, furthermore, he says, as he continues the exposition of this line of thought, he says, "Patience works experience." Now that word translated "experience" is a word that really means something like "an approved character."

Some years ago, this was many years ago now, when I first came to Dallas from the insurance business and was getting ready to attend theological seminary, I had heard, in Birmingham, Alabama, when I was in the insurance business, an expositor of the Bible by the name of Harvey Farmer. And Dr. Farmer was a very old man in those days, probably about seventy-five. He had labored for a long time in North Africa, and he was a Britisher, and for many years he had preached in the open air in Brittan. He had a very strong voice. He said he often spoke to five thousand people in the open air, and he had a big, deep voice.

And furthermore, he had a long flowing beard. He was a man before his time. And he was preaching in Schofield Church when it was down on the corner of Harwood and Brown, and I was listening to Dr. Farmer because I had heard him in Alabama. And

he was talking about Timothy, and he said, "You know there is a text in which this word experience is found in Philippians chapter 2." He was using the text here in Romans 5, but he alluded to Timothy as a man who had experience because Paul there says that he didn't have anyone likeminded upon whom he can count, but Timothy. And he said, "You know there is a text over there in which this word experience is used and it begins and," he has this big, deep voice and he said, "And ye know," and he stopped, and he said, "And ye know," reciting that text in Philippians chapter 2, "And ye know," and finally he said to the audience, "I hope you know, I've forgotten it completely. [Laughter] Well, he turned over to [Laughter] Philippians chapter 2 and finally read it, "And ye know the proof of him."

It's the word that expresses the fact that Timothy's character had been brought to a measure of maturity and a measure of maturity that the Apostle Paul could count upon. So tribulation works patience and patience works an approved character. And then an approved character leads to hope. "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us." So isn't it interesting here that the question arose, "Well Paul faith is a tenuous thing, can we count on faith to hold up in the experiences of life?" "Yes," Paul says when tribulations come, tribulation works patience, patience works an approved character, and approved character works hope. Well, that's what we began with wasn't it? We "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." So, as the process of tribulation has its activity within us and produces its fruit, its' fruit leads to what we had originally, hope, in addition to the fact that we have an approved character. So consequently tribulations cannot destroy the faith that God has implanted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Tribulations actually strengthen the faith that we have and lead us also into a relationship to the Lord God that is even deeper than that that we enjoyed before the tribulations came.

Now when he says in verse 5, "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us," he means

that God's love for us is the pledge that the hope that it promises is a valid hope because God's love has been shed abroad in our hearts. That's why the Apostle John says, "We know that we passed from death to life because we love the brethren." One of the evidences of our new birth is the fact that we love the brethren. And so the love of God implanted within our heart is one of those evidences that this hope that is there because of the love of God is a valid hope.

Now that leads Paul into a discussion here of the love of God. How do we know His love? How can we be sure that he has loved us? Well we know that from his death. In verse 6 through verse 8 he describes those who have been born of Adam in four ways. He says, first of all, that they are without strength, helpless, for these Christ died. In verse 6 he also says that we are ungodly. Well he had said in the 4th chapter that it is the ungodly that he justifies. Then in the 8th verse, we are described as sinners. It is sinners that he saves. And finally, in verse 10, we are described as enemies, and it is enemies whom he reconciles. So the Scriptures speak of us as helpless. The Scriptures speak of us as ungodly. The Scriptures speak of us as sinners. The Scriptures speak of us as enemies of God, but also the remedy for each of these descriptions of the believer is found in the word of God. So this is what we were. We were helpless. We were ungodly. We were sinners. We were enemies. But God commends his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. "My child," said a dying French saint, as she gave a last embrace to her daughter, "I have loved you because of what you are, and my heavenly father to whom I go has loved me, *malgré moi*, in spite of myself." That's the kind of love of which the apostle speaks here.

And that brings us to the reconciliation of God. And I'd like to spend the remainder of our time on this because this is really the most important part of this section. Looking at verse 9 through verse 11, the apostle says we can be sure that we are safe, and furthermore, we can rejoice in it with the certainty that comes from knowing that we have everlasting life because of the reconciliation of God. What Paul gives us here is what I

would call a marvelous *a fortiori* argument. That Latin expression "a fortiori" means "for a stronger reason." In other words, the conclusion that follows in an argument follows with an even greater logical necessity than another conclusion already accepted in the argument. It has also been called an argument from the less to the greater. If God will do one thing which is less, he surely will do this other thing. Or rather, put it the reverse, if he has done a great thing, he will surely do something that is lesser than that great thing. And that's the kind of argument that we have here. If he's done the most for us, he surely will do something that is less than that. If he has done the best thing possible for us, he will surely do the rest.

Now, with that in mind, let's look at these verses, and I'll just center attention on the 10th verse because here we have a three-fold antithesis. Look at it carefully, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," notice the three points, enemies, reconciled through death, now, "much more," that's the sign of the argument "a fortiori" or for a stronger reason, "much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Now putting those three, one right over the other, the top line we would put enemies, reconciled through the death of the son. On the bottom line, now, we would put, "having been reconciled," saved under "reconciled," and then, in his life under "through his death." So the apostle's argument is this. We were enemies. When we were enemies, when we hated God, when we did not want him to minister to us, he came to us, and through the alluring power of the Holy Spirit, he wrought within us, in his own mysterious way, a change of our wills, a change of our disposition, so that the thing that we did not want we ultimately came to want. We, who hated him, by the work of the Holy Spirit, were reconciled as the Holy Spirit brought to us the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. As he says, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son."

Now, if when we were enemies, when we hated God, he came to us, and reconciled us to himself, through the spirits bringing to our attention the conviction that

that involves of the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that we have been reconciled and thus have become friends with God, he will surely, as he says, "Save us on through to the end," for salvation here is salvation in the fullest sense. He will "Save us on through to the end," especially since we now share in his life. It's one of the most magnificent statements of the security of the believer in Jesus Christ that we have in all of the Bible. If when we were enemies God moved upon our hearts, through the work of the Spirit, as he applied the death of Christ to us and brought us to friendship with him, now that we have been reconciled and have become his friends, he will surely save us on into the future, especially since we now share in the life of the Son of God.

You know it's one of those things that has such wide ranging application that it's very difficult at this point to not talk about it, but we're going to have occasion later on to speak about it as well. So this great triple antithesis expresses so beautifully the work of God for us. If anyone has any question about whether having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you're safe and secure, if you'll just think of this text, that should ease all of your problems forever because if he saved us when we were enemies, now that we are his friends, he surely will do something that is less, keep us in the salvation that we enjoy.

Now the apostle doesn't stop with that, however. He says in the 11th verse, "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." Ever since, many years ago, I read this in the original text, I've rejoiced over this statement. The apostle says that we glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't it interesting how often he uses it in this passage? He says in verse 2, "By whom we have access and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God," and then in verse 3, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." It is the same Greek word. And in verse 11, "And not only so, but we also joy," or boast, "in God," he has told us in the 3rd chapter that there is no boasting for men who are saved by grace, but in this chapter, particularly, he says there is no boasting in man, but there is boasting in God, and we ought to boast in God.

But now I want you to notice something particularly in verse 11, we read, "And not only so, but we also joy in God." In the Authorized Version that I have read, you can see that "we also joy," is a finite verb. And if you look only at the English text you would think that this must be an indicative, "We boast," or "We joy," but in the original text it really is a participle that modifies the subject of the verb of verse 10, "We shall be saved." And it's a present participle because it speaks of boasting now about something in the future. And it should be rendered, "And not only so, but boasting in God." Now it goes with, "We shall be saved." So in other words, the apostle is saying, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved," because we share in his life, and we shall be saved boasting in God, through whom we have now at the present time received the reconciliation.

Now there are different ways of rendering this particular participle, but they are not nearly so possible, in my opinion, as the rendering, the literal rendering. "We shall be saved boasting." It's possible to translate it, "We joy," and take it as a participle used as an indicative. It's possible to take it even as an imperative. "And not only so, but boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But the most normal sense is to take it, "We shall be saved boasting." What does he mean when he says, "We shall be saved boasting?" If saved means to be brought into the presence of God, he's talking about how we shall enter the presence of God. In other words, we are going to enter the presence boasting in our Lord Jesus Christ. We're not going to enter into the presence of the Lord with sad lugubrious countenances as some of you have right now as you're looking at me.

What Paul is saying is we're going to be saved boasting in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. In other words, a triumphant, abundant, joyous entrance into the presence of God is guaranteed for those who have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. What a magnificent expression of hope for the Christian. Tribulations, why they work an approved character, and approved

character, why, an approved character gives us hope, and as we think of the cross of Christ and reflect upon what we were and how God, in spite of our enmity, sinner hood, helplessness, and ungodliness, has moved into our lives and has brought us to the knowledge of himself, he surely will keep us until the end. And not only that, he will bring us into the presence of God rejoicing. What a magnificent hope. What a magnificent faith the Christian faith is.

Well let me sum up the words because it's time to stop. Paul has reminded us of our safety. He has said we are justified in verse 1. He's said we're reconciled in verse 9, verse 10. So peace and access and hope are ours. And he's moved on to our certainty. The problem of faith is no problem. If he gave faith when we hated him, he surely will maintain it now that we love him, now that we are his friends. In a moment in chapter 8 he will tell us there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God, even death.

There is an old story about a very uneducated woman in the Southern states in the United States of America. She was very poor. She had no education. She was what we might call very ignorant. But she had studied Scriptures. And because she had studied the Scriptures, she was very confident that she was going to heaven. One of her friends once said to her, "Why nobody knows anything about you and if you go to hell the universe will be ignorant of it." And she said, "Yes, it won't make any difference to the universe, but it will make a great difference to the Lord. His honor would be gone." And she was relying on the faithfulness of his word. And that is true. Because you see in the final analysis, all of this depends on the word of God and the reliability of that word. We often sing, "The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to its foes; that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no never, no never forsake." That sentiment is justified by this great expression of the security of the person in whose heart God has wrought the work of justification and reconciliation. And Paul urges us on to the enjoyment of it. The safety of the believer and the certainty that he

shall enter the presence of the Lord with joy and boasting are written right here in the words of our faithful God, whose honor is pledged to the fulfillment of his word.

Are they written in your heart? Do you have the same assurance of which Paul is speaking? Do you know that you were once an enemy, and the Holy Spirit has brought you to a state of friendship or enmity with this wonderful triune God through Jesus Christ? Do you know the forgiveness of sins? Do you know reconciliation? Do you know what it is to be justified? Do you know what it is to know that Christ has died for you? Do you know that you're a sinner? Do you know that you're ungodly in yourself? Do you know that you're helpless and you cannot believe of yourself? Do you know that your case is hopeless? Have you come to the place where, recognizing that, you have fled to the God who is able to save to the uttermost? We invite you to come to him. He's offered the atoning sacrifice, the sacrifice that puts away sin. It's made for sinners. And if you recognize that you're a sinner, ungodly, helpless, that sacrifice is for you. May God help you to come. If you're here, in this meeting this morning, and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus, we invite you, as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, to come to him. Believe in him, for the Scriptures say, and God's honor is pledged to it, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Come to Christ. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these wonderful, encouraging, comforting words that have come from the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul of Tarsus. We thank Thee for the reliability of the word of God and the faithfulness of our great triune God. We know Thou hast pledged the honor of the God head to the word. And oh, Father, if there are some here who have never come to Christ, may, at this very moment, by Thy grace, there be a great turning to Thee. Oh, God, save souls, strengthen the saints...

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[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]