



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 10:1-4

"Christ, the End of the Law"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our Scripture reading this morning is from Romans chapter 10, verse 1 through verse 4, so will you turn with me in your Bibles to that portion? The apostle in the 10th chapter of this great letter to the Romans says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."

Now in view of the fact that we are going to make reference in the message that follows to the opening part of chapter 9, and that has a great deal to say about the same situation, I'm going to take the liberty, since the Scripture reading is rather brief this morning, to read those verses that open chapter 9 again. And notice that in both of these passages Paul expresses his desire with reference to the salvation of the nation of Israel. Chapter 9 in verse 1 begins with,

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsman according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants."

Notice that particularly, because the covenants do belong to Israel. And we who are Gentiles who have been by the grace of God brought to faith in Jesus Christ are those who share in the covenants that belong to Israel. The natural branches have been cut off of the olive tree, Paul says, using the figure of the olive tree, and we Gentiles, unnatural branches, have been grafted in among them and have become partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree. So we Gentiles are not the recipients of the covenants of promise. They belong to Israel. We share simply by faith, Paul says. And furthermore in Romans 11 he says, "Fear you Gentiles, for the God who cut off the natural branches will not spare you if you do not abide in faith."

So the covenants belong to Israel. "and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever."

Now notice the apostle in Romans 9 is expressing his great heaviness of heart and continual sorrow because Israel is lost, and they are lost in spite of these great objective blessings that belong to them.

Now, turning over to our Scripture that we're reading, you'll notice that the emphasis in Romans 10 rests on the subjective side of things.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

May the Lord bless this reading from his inspired word.

[Message] We're looking again at the epistle of Paul the apostle to the Romans and our subject for this morning is "Christ, the End of the Law". The vital question that the apostle Paul deals with in the Epistle to the Romans is the question: How shall I be saved, and with me, Jews and Gentiles? Today people are not so much interested in this vital question as perhaps we ought to be. I'm sure that if we looked around in our society, we would probably, most of us, be willing to grant that people are not passionately interested in the question, How shall I be saved, and with me, the Jews and Gentiles of the world?

The question that occupies us much more intensively it seems to me is: How shall I be happy, and with me, the world? Whatever aspect this happiness that we speak about may assume for each individual person, a question of happiness rules our thoughts and holds passionate sway over our minds. I guess that's understandable. God certainly does not blame us for wanting to be happy. What earthly father is not anxious to have his children happy? And that is particularly true of our Father in heaven. If there is any person who wishes us to be happy, then it is the triune God. He wishes us to be happy. But God knows that what is good or harmful for the human race is the best thing that may happen to it and he knows that all of our happinesses are not necessarily happinesses in the divine mind. Someone has said "our happiness is as fragile as a soap bubble." But however much it may please him when his children make soap bubbles and enjoy themselves a little and are happy, it pleases him much more when his children are saved.

The great question with which the Epistle to the Romans deals is: How shall I be saved and with me Jews and Gentiles elected by God? That's why salvation remains the burning theme of the Epistle to the Romans. I've a commentator that I sometimes read, who is in some ways a most edifying commentator, in other ways not so edifying. In one of his messages on the Epistle to the Romans, he commented upon the fact that before he gave that particular message he and some of the young people in his church spent a

weekend on the shores of Lake Beale in Switzerland. And during it, one of the party who played a guitar sang a song about a man who left his home by the North Sea and made his fortune in foreign lands. In spite of the happiness, however, he was homesick. And in his mind's eye he could see the open sea and the yellow broom, and he could hear the cry of the seagulls, and even though he had made his fortune in the foreign lands, he kept thinking with nostalgia about home. The song was interesting, the preacher said, because of the insight shown in the words of the song. "I have found happiness, but still I long for home. Fortunate is the man for whom happiness is not sufficient. Fortunate is the man who knows the great nostalgia, the longing for home."

Now I often hear charismatics speak about icicles running up and down their back when they get down on their knees and get up and begin to speak in tongues, but I don't like that kind of icicle myself. But I confess that when I sing "Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee," there's some spiritual icicles that run up and down my back. And this morning as we sang that last line, I felt something of that, because I think that's something of the great nostalgia that every true Christian has. He wants to go home. Deep down within there is a longing to be in the presence of the Lord.

Well the message of the Epistle to the Romans speaks to fortunate people into whose hearts God has breathed this great nostalgia, this gratitude, this appreciation for what he has done for us. "Fortunate is the man for whom happiness is not sufficient." We're not so much interested in being happy as we are in being home and also in being in the will of God.

Now the apostle has stressed the divine side of salvation in Romans chapter 9, really in Romans chapter 8, too. But in Romans chapter 9, he's been talking about the divine side of the sovereignty of God and our salvation. He's talked about the divine sovereignty, not only in salvation but also in reprobation. He has mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and he hardens whom he will harden.

But when we come to chapter 10, the apostle gives us the other side. He talks about human responsibility. Now when we talk about human responsibility we don't want to misunderstand the apostle. We don't want to imply in any way that when we talk about human responsibility that we're talking about human works. Occasionally these things are mixed in the minds of believers. The apostle when he speaks about divine sovereignty does not oppose divine sovereignty to human works, but he speaks about divine sovereignty and then he speaks about human responsibility. Human responsibility is the requirement to respond to the sovereign grace of God as expressed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And also, when we preach constantly the sovereignty of God in our salvation, we do not want to say it to the extent that no word is ever said concerning human responsibility. It is frequently true that people who come in and hear a Calvinist preacher, they come in and hear him once and he mentions sovereignty of God and salvation, and they go out and say, "Well, we are responsible; the Bible says we are responsible." Of course so, even a neophyte in Calvinist Theology 101 would know we are responsible. But do you have to say that in every message about which you're speaking. If you're speaking about human responsibility, do you have to say something about divine sovereignty as well? You cannot include all of theology in one message, though some people would like it, would like to hear it once and let that be the end of it.

I got a letter a few years back after I'd given a message in New Jersey. And this letter was written by a young lady who was not married. In the course of the letter which I have before me, she said, "your message on predestination reached my heart in a special way. I have never been worried in any way about this subject but did not fully, did not feel fully settled in my mind one way or the other. After hearing the verses or particularly the verse in Romans 8 gone over word by word as you did, although I probably would not be able to explain it to anyone else, the matter was settled for me. It seemed that any question I had was only because I was holding on to the thought that we, or more

particularly I, had some part in the decision. This of course meant that it was not quite all grace, nor was the glory then all his."

Well she was trying to express the fact that God is sovereign in our salvation. And there is something of course that we have to do with our salvation. We do respond in faith, we believe, but that faith itself is the gift of God. But we are still required to respond, that's human responsibility, and the apostle in Romans 10 will mention and emphasize human responsibility, the human side of the divine side of the sovereignty of God in our salvation. Now we shall not be truly sound in the faith until we've come to terms with these two important aspects of our faith.

Now coming to Romans chapter 10, the apostle speaks of his eagerness for Israel's salvation. Listen to what he says in verse 1 as he declares it. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." The apostle prayed for Israel. He expressed as his heart's desire that they be saved.

Do you pray for Israel? Is Israel on your prayer list? The Old and the New Testaments with their sixty-six books were largely written by Jews, if not altogether written by Jews, and Christ according to the flesh was born a Jew. I would imagine that there is very little prayer that rises up from the Church of Jesus Christ for Israel today. Do you love him, Jesus Christ the Jew? Or do you call him some abusive name? Well if you're a genuine Christian, I don't see how you can help but be interested in prayer for Israel.

A person came to Dr. Louis T. Talbot once and said to him, "Do you expect me to love the Jews? Why they are terrible people." Mr. Talbot replied, "Yes they are, nearly as bad as the Gentiles." And then he went on to say, "Just look at the way the Gentiles are acting toward one another, toward Jewish people, toward others." But he said finally, "Even if the Jews were worse than the Gentiles, what of it? We should pray for them anyway." The Scriptures say, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," and it also offers a promise: "Those who do that shall prosper."

The apostle said, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." It seems to me it is proper for a prayer for Israel to arise from the heart of a Christian because the ultimate consummation of the program of God depends upon the response of the nation Israel historically.

Why is Paul so concerned for Israel? Well in chapter 9, he said he was so concerned for them because they've have such large privileges, and they have neglected them. And even though they have these great privileges, they're lost. In other words, the contrast between their high position and their low status is such as to cause him to say "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart." He looks at the objective side of it. But now in chapter 10, he looks at the subjective side of it. He says, "I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."

Now Paul is not the only one who has spoke about Israel's zeal. The Lord Jesus spoke about Israel's zeal too. In Matthew chapter 23 and verse 15, he speaks of the zeal of the Pharisees and the scribes. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." The Jewish people were dedicated to the cause of God. They were zealous. In fact, Jesus said when I leave you, you apostles, why you are going to suffer a great deal of persecution from people who think that when they kill you, they are really doing God service. That's what he says in John chapter 16 in verse 2. No one is more dedicated, Jesus said, then the Jewish man who seeks to make a proselyte and will compass see and land in order to do it.

We think of communists today as dedicated. They are zealous for their particular cause. But dedication is not enough to bring one salvation.

One of the commentators that I like to read every now and then is R.C.H. Lenski. I don't read him very much now for the simple reason that I think I've read most of the pages in the ten large volumes, ten or so large volumes in his New Testament commentaries series. But in connection with the exposition of Romans, he has said,

"Take poison ardorly. The ardor will as little prevent the deadly effect of the poison as the lack of ardor would."

You see the question is not with what zeal we eat or take our medicine, but the question is: What is the character of the medicine? The man who is zealous for the things of God is not necessarily acceptable to God. Zeal does not find acceptance with God. Sincerity is of no account whatsoever in salvation. But we have allowed people to constantly say over and over again, "it does not really matter what you believe, just so long as you believe something and you really believe it." Or "If we do the best that we can surely God must accept us."

Well that is utterly false. Just as false as Mr. Linsky has said, "Take poison ardently, the ardor will as little prevent the deadly effect of the poison is the lack of ardor would." It doesn't make any difference whether you take poison with a great deal of zeal or take it indolently. It will kill you, poison. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the remedy. If we take other remedies, even though we take them zealously, they will not save us. So, "I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."

Augustine put it this way, "It's better to limp in the road than to run eagerly away from it." If you are going from Dallas to Fort Worth, and even if you can only walk limpingly along the way, you'll get to Fort Worth. But if you run eagerly in other directions you'll never reach Fort Worth, which of course might be a blessing, [Laughter] but nevertheless, you will not reach Fort Worth. Now Augustine didn't know anything about Fort Worth or he might have said something about that. But our friends from Fort Worth recognize that we're just kidding. [Laughter]

But anyway our zeal does not have anything to do with whether we are saved or not. The apostle Paul had great zeal. For example in Philippians chapter 3, he speaks about the things that he had and also his zealousness and what that amounted to in the final analysis. He said,

"I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath reason for which he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. (Here is a man who was zealous for God. Zealous in divine things, but oh how wrong. Sincerity does not save anyone. Listen to what Paul says about these advantages and about the zeal that he had for God.) "But what things were gain for me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God which is by faith:"

So what is church membership and sitting at the table of the Lord, or being baptized, or doing the best that you can, or joining a church, or being a good citizen? What are these things so far as divine salvation is concerned, so far as the possession of the righteousness of God in Christ? They are in Paul's words, "dung" if the person trusts in them. Zeal persecuting the church, doing the best that he could, but hopelessly lost.

The apostle in another place in the book of Acts speaks of the same thing. Acts chapter 22 and verse 3. He is defending himself in the city of Jerusalem and as he begins to speak, he begins to speak in the Hebrew tongue and suddenly there's a hush that falls over the audience, because here is a man speaking in their own language, and he said,

"I'm a Jew. I was born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was

zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."

He was zealous with reference to God but lost. So he says in chapter 10, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." Who has not heard the knock on his door and gone to the door and has found there a Mormon? A Mormon with a great deal of zeal. One may admire the zeal but the errors are errors of theology and errors of truth and the result is that though there is zeal for God, it is not according to knowledge.

And the same thing with Jehovah's Witnesses. Zealous, yes, very zealous but zealous for that which is untruth. They have a zeal and a zeal that might be said to be for divine things, but not according to knowledge and therefore lost.

Now the Jewish error that the apostle speaks about is an error that's very easy for us to have today too. In fact, this is the great error of the Gentiles as well. The apostle only speaks about Jews, because that was the historical situation for him. He would write the same thing for us today. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness."

The apostle now shows the way of salvation, but you'll notice that he does it drastically and negatively. He tells you how not to be saved in order to stress how one must be saved. It's good to preach negatively at times. Some people don't even get points unless you preach negatively every now and then and the apostle does it. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about seeking to establish their own righteousness."

We've all approached places in the road where there is a sign that says dangerous curve. Well sometimes you get so used to the signs that you don't pay any attention to them until it's too late. I think if the Department of Public Safety might take a wreck of

an automobile and set it out right by that sign, some of us would realize that we were approaching a dangerous curve. So that is what the apostle does here. He sets the wrecked auto of Jewish attempt to establish their own righteousness before God in order to point out that it's possible to come to grief over the truth of a God by ignorance of it, and it's possible to come to disaster over Jesus Christ also by failing to understand what the Scriptures have to say about him. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about seeking to establish their own."

Now notice in the latter part of verse 3, he says they "have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." That is an amazing thing, isn't it? They've received the gift of Moses and the prophets, Moses and the prophets who taught that men were to be justified ultimately by faith. They've received the gift of Moses and the prophets but they refused the Redeemer of whom Moses spoke, the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. They have received the pearls of wisdom and truth that the prophets have said, but they've refused the one pearl of great price, the Lord Jesus.

One of the outstanding ministers of the earlier part of the 20th century was R.A. Torrey. He was pastor of the Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles. He speaks of the fact in one of his messages that a minister asked him to talk to a young man who wanted to go into the ministry. He was a splendid looking fellow, and when he came to Mr. Torrey, Mr. Torrey said to him, "You want to go into the military? Are you a Christian?" "Why of course I am," the young man said, "I was brought up a Christian and I'm not going back on the training of my parents."

"Have you been born again?" Mr. Torrey asked. "What?" the young man said. "Well, Jesus said 'except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God'" Mr. Torrey said. Well he said, "I never heard of that."

"Did you know that you had committed the greatest sin that a man can commit?" Mr. Torrey said. "No, I never did." the young man replied.

"What do you think it is?" Mr. Torrey asked him. "Murder" the young man said. "You're greatly mistaken," Mr. Torrey said. "Let's see what God says" and with that he opened his Bible to Matthew chapter 22 verse 37, verse 38 and he read the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." "Which commandment is it?" he asked the young man. The young man said, "It's the first and great commandment."

"Have you kept it? Have you loved the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind? Have you loved your neighbor as yourself? Have you put God first in everything, in business, in pleasure, in social life, in politics?" He could have said from the moment you've breathed your first breath until you shall breathe your last.

The young man was honest, he said, "No sir, I have not." "What have you done then?" Mr. Torrey said. "I have broken this commandment," the young man said. "Which commandment is it?" Mr. Torrey said. He said, "The first in the greatest commandment." "Well, what have you done then?" He said, "Well, I have broken the first and greatest of God's commandments. I have committed the greatest sin a man can commit. But I never saw it before."

You see that is what the Bible does say. It says that if we do not love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and our neighbor as ourselves, we have broken the first and greatest commandment. Now I would presume that there would be no question about that in this audience, that all of you in this audience would have to acknowledge that you have not loved the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and your neighbors, well only occasionally, your neighbors as your self all of your life.

But in order to be absolutely honest, we're now going to take about a minute intermission, and for those of you who would like to raise your hand and tell us how you have kept this first and greatest commandment, we'll give you an opportunity to stand on your feet and tell us how you've been able to do it. No, you don't want to stand on your

feet. I wouldn't want to stand on my feet. I've broken the first and greatest commandment many times. Many times before I ever knew that this commandment was in the Bible, I had broken it. That's what we are. We are murderous sinners.

Now if we're murderous sinners, we need a savior. We need a Redeemer. We are hopelessly lost. We have sought as the Jewish people did to establish our own righteousness, and we have not submitted ourselves to the righteousness of God.

I'm a great admirer as you know of Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, and not too long ago I was looking over an article which I used in the teaching minister at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago, where I'm teaching now. And in the course of this particular course on the theology of Warfield, I read this article a second time, or third time, and I had skipped this paragraph, but it impressed me this time. Warfield is speaking about a flippant critic contemplating the religion of Israel and has told us, Warfield said, of his admiration for what he found in the religion of Israel and admiration for what he found there in this way. He said in the course of his review of this work that "An honest God is the noblest work of man." The man, he said was evidently quoting Robert Ingersoll. "An honest God is the noblest work of man."

Now Mr. Warfield went on to say, "There is a very, very profound truth lurking in the remark 'an honest God is the noblest work of man.'" Only Mr. Warfield says "the work is too noble for man and probably man has never compassed it. In fact man has never of himself presented us with an honest God, a benevolent God, a God who loves, yes, but not an honest God, not a righteous God."

That is what man does not want, a righteous God. He loves the idea that God is a God of love, which of course he derives only from the Bible. But the idea of an honest God is something that is too much for man to originate. One only finds the idea of an honest God in the divine revelation. That's the distinguishing character of the God of revelation. He is thoroughly honest. He is thoroughly conscientious. He is thoroughly

just. He is a God who deals honestly with himself and he's a God who deals honestly with us.

And because he is a God who deals honestly with us, he's not a God who can deal with sinners as if they were not sinners. Because he is an honest God, he must deal with sinners as sinners. He must deal with us as those who have broken the first and great commandment. And that is why that's probably the deepest ground of the necessity of an expiatory atonement by the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's why we preach in Believers Chapel that men can only be saved by the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. For we are lost and undone and an honest God will ultimately deal with us in honesty, in righteousness and in justice. And oh, I would not want to stand before an honest, righteous and just God except in the righteousness, the full righteousness of God through Jesus Christ, my representative and my redeemer. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Now the apostle in the 4th verse explains, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." I wish I understood thoroughly and precisely exactly what Paul is speaking about here. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Unfortunately, that text may be taken in several different ways grammatically. And unfortunately further, these different ways are true to Scripture. And so what I would like to do is just to present to you some ideas which are true to Scripture that have been suggested as the meaning of Paul here.

We can take this word "end" in different ways. "Christ is the end of the law." We may take it in the sense of goal. Christ is the goal of the law. In other words, everything in the Mosaic law tended toward the coming of Jesus Christ and particularly in the moral side of the Mosaic law.

In Romans chapter 3 in verse 20, the apostle has said "Through the law is the full knowledge of sin." Now we've just been talking about the first and great commandment.

The first and great commandment of the law is "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all heart, with all thy mind, and the second is like unto it thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself." That statement is a summary of the two tables of the law. That was designed to bring men to a knowledge of sin.

I noticed as I looked out on the audience, there were not any of you just waiting to raise your hand when I gave you an opportunity to raise your hand, because the law had done its work. The law had brought you to the conviction that you had broken it and you were a sinner and you stand under divine condemnation. "Christ is the end of the law." In other words, the law is designed to show men that they're sinners and to prepare them for the coming of the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As Paul puts it, the law is a slave guardian, like the slave that used to take the Roman boy to his school and used to teach him and who was responsible for him. So the Law of Moses was God's valid training for the children of Israel from the time of Sinai to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the cross on which he died when the veil of the temple was rent in twain. God's saying from this point on we are not under law as a code, we're under grace. And the Holy Spirit has come to indwell every believer and to teach us the law of Christ.

Well that's one way to understand it and it's a biblical truth, of course. "Christ is the end of the law for righteous to everyone that believeth." But "end" may also be used in the sense of antitype, because in the Mosaic law and part of that same law, one cannot distinguish in the Mosaic law, it is never distinguished in the Bible the moral law from the civil and ceremonial. All make up the law. To break one part of it is to break all. To fail to bring the sacrifices in Jerusalem as required is to break the Law of Moses today.

Christ is the "end" of the law in the sense that those sacrifices pointed forward to him, illustrated what he would do when he came. He was the burnt offering. He was the meal offering, he is the meal offering. He is the peace offering. He's the sin offering. He's the trespass offering. He's the drink offering. He's the offering of the red heifer, all

of the offerings. He is the great offering on the Day of Atonement. All of these things were to give us little bits of self understanding concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

Everything gathered together when the Lamb of God came. He's the end of the law; he's the antitype of all of these types expressed in the Old Testament. Now the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks about the law "being a shadow of good things to come." That's what Paul may be speaking about here.

And there is one final sense. The word "end" may also have the sense of termination. Christ is the termination of the law. He is the finish of the law. He is the windup of the law. Now I'm inclined to think this is what Paul means, but I don't want to force my interpretation on you because it's not an easy passage. And these other ideas are good ideas that are expressed in other parts of the New Testament. In fact, even in other parts of Paul. But over in Galatians Chapter 3, the apostle says something that is appropriate, I think. He says,

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But (he says) no man is justified by the law, (by our good works or keeping the law) in the sight of God, that is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

The Old Testament said. So in the Old Testament it was said that there would be no one able to come forward, excluding the Redeemer himself, who could say I have been saved by my works; from the time I threw my first breath in the delivery room until my last breath I have loved the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul. And Paul says "the law is not of faith." The law is not faith system. But he says, the law says "the man that doeth them shall live in them." In other words, ideally and hypothetically, if there could be such a thing, a righteous man, he would be justified by God.

But lest there be any question about it, Paul says in Romans 10 and verse 4, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." He's the termination of the "law for righteousness for everyone that believeth in Christ." Like the rich young ruler who came to the Lord Jesus one day, he had all the keys of life hanging from his girdle. Every thing was perfect for him. If he had walked in an auditorium like this and there had been some mothers with eligible young girls, they would've said, "Ah, there's the one, there's the one." This man came running to the Lord Jesus Christ. He had zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. He said,

"Good master, what good things, shall I do that I may have eternal life? (He's on the wrong path right from the beginning.) Jesus said, Why callest thou me good? (Or why do you ask me concerning that which is good, the Greek text says.) There is none good but one, that is God. If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments. (Go on keeping the commandments one right after the other forever; as long as you're breathing, keep them. This young man in the self-righteousness so characteristic of human nature said,) Which ones? Jesus said, Thou shall do no murder. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not steal. Thou shall not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man said unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? (He had an idea of keeping that was not biblical. And so the Lord Jesus in order to show him that he really had not kept the law said) If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

So he didn't love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his mind, with all his soul, in everything. His possessions were for himself. Now the disciples are standing around and they thought a man like this could get into heaven, after all religious, young,

concerned, talking about eternal life, ideal, the kind of man that you would say, My, what an upstanding young man. James take a look at him.

"Jesus turned to them and said, Verily, verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall with difficulty enter into the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

(One of the Gospel writers at this point said) they that trust in riches"

It's impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Don't bring any explanations about the needle gate; it doesn't apply here at all. Luke uses a surgical needle in his explanation of this term. I've heard all kinds of amusing illustrations that our Lord is supposed to have said.

The disciples were amazed at this, and so they turned around and they say, "Who then can be saved?" If this fellow cannot be saved, who can be saved? And Jesus said, "With men it is impossible." "With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible." He can save individuals who have broken the first and greatest commandment by his grace.

This is the heart of Paul's statement in Ephesians 2, "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: "With men it is impossible. "Not of works lest any man should boast." With God all things are possible. Why was the fountain filled with blood if you need no washing? You need washing, I need washing. I need the righteousness of God. They sought to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to the righteousness of God. They've not realized their lost condition and rested in Christ.

I have a good friend. He's a preacher in the state of Michigan now. I have been at Bible conferences with him. I always look forward to hearing him. He always gives a good illustration or so, as well as being a very good preacher. In one of his messages at

Canadian Keswick some years ago, where we both were speakers in Canada, he was telling about the righteousness of God and he wanted to illustrate what it means to possess it. And he said he was driving along in his automobile around noon across Canada and came to London Ontario and it was about lunchtime. London is where Bill McCray is ministering right now. He said in those days they were going right through the center of town and there was a large hotel, a very nice hotel, and so he and his wife and his children got out of their automobile after parking it, walked into the hotel, which was a rather formal hotel, went to the restaurant and started to go into the restaurant.

And he said there was a maitre'd standing there in a very proper coat and tie, dressed very formally. And he said as I took my family toward that restaurant he took a look at me and he said [laughter]. He said he never said a word, he just shook his head. He said I was dressed in pants and a shirt and that was all. So he said I turned and decided we must go somewhere else. But he said as I turned and started to go out, a young lady came to him and said, "Sir, You may obtain a coat around the corner." And so that intrigued him, and he didn't want to travel somewhere else, so he walked around the corner and there was a little booth and someone was standing in it and he walked over and said, "May I obtain a coat here?" and they said "yes". And the person in the booth took a look at him, his general size, walked back in the back and brought out a coat and a tie. And so he put on the tie and he put on this coat and he said I walked around the corner with my family again and said that man was standing right there at the door again and this time again he didn't even say anything; all he did was just [laughter] and I went in and I had a meal. And Mr. Sugden went on to say, "You see, that's really something like the righteousness of God. It's something we don't have of ourselves. It's something that is provided by the management. And that coat which enabled me to enter and eat, provided by the management gave me access." And so the righteousness of God that was through the Lord Jesus Christ and the blood shed on the cross of Calvary is sufficient to cover the sin of having broken the first and greatest commandment.

Now I want you to notice one or two things as we close. I'll just mention them. Notice the universality of this salvation. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to "every one" that believeth. It is universally offered. Notice the liberality of it. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that "believeth." It's not works of righteousness which we have done that make us acceptable. It is the mercy of God in giving us faith to make us acceptable. We are made acceptable by the management.

It's amazing, really. Saving faith is so simple. It's mustard seed kind of faith. It's the faith that tremblingly touches the Savior's garment. It's the faith that says, "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief." It's the faith that a sinking Peter, sinking because of unbelief, utters when he says, "Lord, save me." and Jesus reaches out his hand and saves him. And it's the faith of a weeping Mary, concerned over the loss of a savior. It's that simple. It's the faith that trusts Christ. It's the faith that moves out of ourselves and leans upon the one who has died for us. It's the one who accepts him as our continental head who has offered the atoning sacrifice for all for whom he has died. May God in his wonderful grace move in your heart to lean upon Christ for your salvation.

And I should say of course, it's very individual, because he says, "Christ is the end of the law for everyone that believeth." And that everyone is singular. For every individual one that believeth, Christ is the end of the law. And when you come to an understanding of what Jesus Christ has done for you in this sense, then you can truly sing "Rock of ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." And then the great nostalgia of knowing that you are bound for a heavenly home will grip you and happiness will become that much less significant for you.

May God touch your heart through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. May you stop trusting in your own righteousness, seeking to establish your own acceptance before God. May you acknowledge your lost condition and lean on Christ. And oh, may there flow out some gratitude. May Believers Chapel always be known for gratitude for grace.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we are so thankful to Thee for the truths of the word of God, and especially for the truth of divine justification for lost guilty sinners. Oh how we need it. We praise Thee for the possession of it in grace, and we are grateful. Go with us now. For Jesus' sake. Amen.