



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Romans 3:5-8

"The Problem of Antinomianism"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading this morning is again just four verses of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. So will you turn there and listen as I read verses 5, 6, 7, 8 of Romans chapter 3. Now, while you're finding Romans chapter 3, let me remind you simply that the apostle has been showing that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin. He has demonstrated the sinfulness of the Gentiles, or he has accused them of sinfulness. He has accused the Jews of sin, which has raised the question, well if there's no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles, then what's the profit of being a Jew? What advantage is there? Everyone knows there is some advantage down through the centuries in being a Jew. Well, the apostle says, "Much every way." Even at the present time there is much advantage for the Jew.

And incidentally, we are living in the same age in which the apostle wrote this. So that we can say that there is much advantage even today in being a Jew. There is profit in being a part of the circumcision. Gentiles would be very quick to say, "What advantage?" And Paul adds, "Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the promises of God," the Messianic promises. The Bible says that there are certain Messianic promises that are going to be fulfilled to them. Those Abrahamic promises, as they were

expanded in the Davidic and New Covenants, they are to be fulfilled. And consequently, the Jews have a future. That is their advantage. "Ah," but a Gentile or one of the Jews perhaps raises his hand and says, "Wait a minute, Paul. The Jewish nation has rejected their Messiah, Jesus Christ. So are not the promises thereby cancelled?" And so Paul answers that question, "For what if some did not believe?" Notice he said "some" not all. For the Christian church was Jewish in its beginnings. On the day of Pentecost, that group of people was Jewish, and those that were converted were largely Jewish, and so the promises were fulfilled to that Jewish remnant that believed. Those ancient promises made to Abraham did find their fulfillment on the day of Pentecost, and out of that Jewish church has come the present church; largely now made up of Gentiles, but not destitute of Jews to the present day.

"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" Paul says, "Good heavens, no. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." He will be faithful to his promises, even though those who are the object of his promises have rebelled against him. Now you can see the apostle believed in efficacious grace, because he believed that God would ultimately bring those people who have rejected him to faith in him.

Now that raises some further questions, and the apostle deals with those questions now in verses 5 through 8. "But if our unrighteousness, "translate that our unbelief in the promises, "commend the righteousness," translate that the attribute of righteousness including his faithfulness to his promises, "commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance," or who inflicts wrath. How is God able to judge people who by their unrighteous rebellion against him have served to glorify his faithfulness in the confirmation and carrying out of his promises? "I speak as a man," Paul says. "Good heavens no, for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory;" someone says, "why yet

am I also judged as a sinner?" If I've been the means for the glorification of God and his truth, "Why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come?" Paul has a brief word for them whose condemnation, whose judgment the Greek text says, is just. May God bless this reading of his word.

[prayer removed from audio]

[Message] The subject for today is "Divine Faithfulness, Divine Judgment, and the Problem of antinomianism." It is said that coming events cast their shadow before them. Now this is often so, and one finds it even in the Apostle Paul, because the pernicious evil of antinomianism casts a baleful shadow over Paul's words in Romans chapter 3. Antinomianism, what does that word mean? Antinomianism is almost a transliteration of two Greek words, one the preposition ante, which means facing against, sometimes for; and nomas, the Greek word which means law. So that antinomianism is essentially the idea of being against the law. Historically antinomianism is traced often to the controversy between Martin Luther and an old friend by the name of John Agricola. Agricola, who lived from 1494 approximately to 1566, and therefore a great deal of his life during the time of Luther's life, had argued that Christians have been freed from the Law of Moses by the cross of Christ, and therefore, were no longer required to preach and keep the Ten Commandments. He feared that, if the Law were preached, then justification by faith alone might be confused with justification by works.

Luther and the Lutherans generally reacted very strongly against the teaching of Agricola, because they felt that it was necessary for the Law to be preached in order for men to come to the knowledge of their sin. And since it was logical for a man to come to the knowledge of his sin, and then to have the gospel preached to him as the remedy for

his sin, it seemed that the Law and then the gospel formed a very apt order in the preaching of the word.

Now, Agricola and the antinomians contended that the Law had been done away with, and that Repentance came from the preaching of Law, but from the preaching of the gospel. Now, a good case can be made for Agricola's position, and in fact, even John Wesley said that the gospel itself is "within a hair's breadth" of antinomianism.

Antinomianism came to be then the view that the gospel renders obedience to the Law unnecessary, and even damaging to the hope of one's salvation. We find it expressed in the New Testament in passages such as Romans 6, where the apostle, having spoken of free grace and the forgiveness of sins answers the objection, "Well then, if we are saved by grace, and God is glorified in that grace, then let us go on sinning that grace may abound." And associated with that has come to be what we call antinomianism.

Now, there are a number of things that could be said about it, but it's not important for us at this point. And later on, perhaps when we deal with chapter 6, we'll say more about it. It is important for some contemporary problems that we have, because there are some who do believe in the sovereign grace of God who like to put Christian believers under the Law. In Believers Chapel we have never taught that. We have been taught rather, and have taught, that by virtue of the cross of Jesus Christ, the Law of Moses has been done away as a code, and we are no longer under the Law of Moses as a code. We do not affirm, of course, that we are not expected to produce the righteousness of the Law that is produced by walking by the Holy Spirit. We have never taught Sabbatarianism, but there are good men, brethren of ours, who have taught that we should keep the Sabbath, because that is part of the Law of Moses, and we should also have the Law as a rule of life.

But now, it's not important to get into that subject at the present time, simply to mention that these are questions that have been raised, and which have been discussed by evangelical believers for many, many years. The teaching of antinomianism, then,

essentially was that obedience to the grace of the gospels renders Law obedience unnecessary or even damaging to salvation. To put it in a nut shell, the answer to antinomianism is simply this that while God has set us free from the Law, he has also set us free from sin. And the fact that we are free from the Law does not mean that we therefore are free to sin, that is an inference that cannot be reasonably and logically derived from the gospel of the grace of God. In chapter 6, I say, the apostle will deal with the question in more detail, and we should, I guess leave it for that ourselves.

The chief aim of the verses before us it to overthrow the Jewish claim of exemption from judgment, by their abuse of the truth of God's faithfulness to his promises. In other words, what they are saying then is, "Paul, if what you are saying is correct, that is that the disobedience of Jewish people does not mean that they have forfeited the promises of God, but they are still the objects of the promises of God. Then that would seem to indicate that God cannot judge sinners, because sinners have become the means of the glorification of God. And if sinners have become the means of the glorification of God, how can God judge them, when by their sin they are glorifying him? God doesn't punish people who glorify him, does he?"

Perhaps the occasion for this particular outburst at this point is this apostle's citation of Psalm 51 in verse 4, which is recorded here in Romans 3:4. David had spoken of his sin, and then he had said, "That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings," leading some to believe that what David was saying is "I have sinned in order that you might be justified in your sayings." As if to suggest that my sin has been brought about by God in order that he might be glorified. And so that raises the question then, how can David be judged or how can anyone else be judged, if man's sin is used to glorify God? You might say right at this point, if God overthrows the effects of man's sin, and uses man's sin in order to glorify him, that's no credit to man. The credit, if any credit belongs in such a situation, is God's credit not man's. And so the fact that he may turn man's sin to glorification of his name is no credit for men.

For example, we studied not too long ago the Book of Genesis, and the wicked brothers of Joseph sold him into captivity. Joseph, speaking about it later says, "You meant it unto me for evil, but God meant it for good." But those brothers knew that they were not glorified in the actions that they did. They knew that they were to be judged for it, and they spoke about the fact that they knew that they had suffered the way they had, because they had sinned. It was God who got the glory of providentially turning their sin to his own glorification. And so even though the brothers are the means by which God is glorified, they have no credit because of that.

It helps us when we read the Bible, to think and to reason over the things that are said there. Well, this little brief paragraph is structured very easily, verse 5 through 8. I've spent two Sundays on these eight verse for the simple reason that they are closely reasoned, and I have found from experience that when we come to a section in which there is close reasoning on the apostle's part, the tendency of many people who attend church only on Sunday morning is to bail out if it requires some kind of close reasoning. That's very unfortunate, extremely unfortunate, because people ought to study the Bible.

And the apostle, by giving us this, is certainly indicating that it was his will, God's will that we pay attention to things like this and reason through them. And if we cannot get anything out of it, it's because we're not spending enough time in the study of the Scriptures. Well now, here's a very simple little four verses, we have some questions in verse 5, two of them to be exact, which are answered in verse 6. And then we have two questions in verses 7 and 8, which are answered in the last clause of verse 8. So we have two questions and an answer, two questions and an answer. That relatively simple, isn't it?

Now, we're going to put the two questions in both places into one question, because they're essentially the same thing. And the first question is, is God unjust to punish the unjust? Now it's a fundamental truth of the Bible, an axiomatic truth we can call it, that God is truth; that all truth comes from God; and also that he is just. So a

fundamental truth of the Bible is that God is just. That truth comes from him. That he is true to his word. Someone has said, "The truth shall make you free," unless you're a criminal, and in which case the courts shall make you free. [Laughter] But in God's case he is always truthful, and he is just. So we approach this with that presupposition, with that axiomatic truth.

Now, Paul didn't think it was necessary at this point to say, "Now wait a minute, I know that there may be some of you in the audience who may think that God is not just. So we'll note the next two lectures to the justice of God." The people to whom he was writing, and for whom he spoke this were people who accepted that axiomatic truth that God is just, so that's why he doesn't argue it; that's why he can even just say God is just and expect men to say, "Well then, yes we agree with what you're saying." They accepted his presuppositions.

Now the Godward question, which is found in verse 5, is very simple. Paul says, "But," after having cited Psalm 51:4, "But if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who inflicts wrath" Or "takes vengeance" as the Authorized Version renders it. But inflicts wrath, wrath is true to the Greek text. Now he laid himself open to this question by citing Psalm 51:4, which could be taken by an objector to indicate that David said that he sinned in order that God might be justified. Now, when we look at some of the expressions here, in order to understand this verse we need to analyze them just briefly. Take the expression, "the righteousness of God," in verse 5. Later on that expression will be used by Paul of the righteousness given to us when we believe in Christ, imputed righteousness or justification. But here, it's a reference to that divine attribute; that is that God is just in his actions. It's the divine attribute in the comprehensive sense in the light of the context, and it includes faithfulness to his word. He's just in that sense. He's not unrighteous in breaking his word. He is righteous in fulfilling it. And also, it's used in the sense of the attribute of righteousness as it pertains to truth, because in verse 4 he will say, "But let

God be true, but every man a liar." And then in verse 7, "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie." So the term righteousness then is a reference to the attribute of God. He is just in his dealing with us; in his thoughts, in his actions, and in the things that he carries out. He even justifies in righteousness, or justly.

Now, he adds another thing in verse 5 that's rather interesting. It's just a little parenthetical phrase, "I speak as a man." Now, this is an implicit insight into Paul's attitude to human reason. There are people who think that human reason takes precedence over faith. That is that reason, by reason we may be led to faith in the word of God. My own personal feeling is that that is invalid, that we cannot by human reason be led to a faith in the God of the Bible. There are some who believe that we ought to just follow reason without any faith at all, and by following reason we can come to truth. Almost all of the world believes this, almost all of the things that appear in our newspapers, even when men are talking about morality, are products of belief that by human reason we may arrive at truth. That all knowledge is deducible by human reason or knowledge alone; rationalism, empiricism really a form of rationalism, the philosophies of Kant and Hegel and almost all of the philosophers are grounded in this fundamental view that by human reason we may arrive at truth. This is a failure, in the apostolic opinion, to recognize that all men have fallen under the dominion of sin, and therefore their minds are affected by sin and they cannot think clearly. Consequently, they could never come to truth apart from divine revelation; regeneration, revelation

There are some who say, on the other hand, that we should accept in faith the things of the word of God regardless of reason. Tertullian, the great Latin church father said, "I believe because it is absurd." Now, that's a slightly misapplication of what he said, but there are people who believe the same thing. Many fundamentalists believe the Bible in that way, they believe it, and they do not have any logical system by which their thoughts are arranged in their mind. It's just found in the Bible, and therefore they believe it. Frequently there are lots of illogical things mixed up in that fundamentally

correct position. And some existentialists have also take that position, and some neo-orthodox men, that faith apart from reason is really what we should follow.

One of the leading neo-orthodox men, Professor Emil Brunner once said, "*Gott könne verner wil eine mensche sogar durch falsche lebre sein vortzagen*" Which means, "God can if he will speak to a man even through false teaching of his word." In other words, he says that a God who lies may nevertheless speak truth to us. That of course, is irrationalism. Evangelicals, who have been thoughtful about this, have generally taken the position that we are to approach the Bible in faith. And by the use of our human reason under faith and the sovereignty of God are to arrange the things that have been given to us in orderly manner. So that we come to the Bible with the presupposition that the Bible is the word of God, and we use our human reason given to us by God in order to study this revelation, but our reason is always subject the divine revelation and faith in our presupposition that the Bible is the word of God. Now you can see that the apostle holds to some view very similar to that, if not that precise view. For he says when he's giving these objection, he says, now, these are human objections. They are not the kinds of objections that one derives if he's thinking like the Lord God. "I speak as a man." Or we could put it in other ways, "I speak according to human reason."

Now, his answer is given in verse 6, he speaks here as a Christian apostle. He says first of all, "God forbid." As J.B. Phillips renders this expression *ma gin sk* ; it's, "What a ghastly thought." Now, if Mr. Philips were here he would say of course, "What a ghastly thought to think that God should be unrighteous if he should take vengeance upon men who have by their sinfulness and unrighteousness brought glory to him." The fact that we bring glory to God in unrighteousness does mean that we are not going to be judged by him. For if that were true, then how could God judge the world? But we all know, as a presupposition, God is going to judge the world. So therefore, that philosophy must be wrong. Someone might say to Paul at this point, "But assertion of something is not proof of it, Paul."

Yes, but you see, Paul was speaking to people who accepted that fundamental presupposition. That's why his argument is valid for them. If he wanted to talk to someone who did not accept that presupposition, he would say, "All right, now let's talk about whether God is just." And then he would give us a lecture on that. But that's unnecessary, because they all knew that from the beginning of the Bible to the end; it affirmed that God was just. Abraham said, "Shall not the God of all the earth do right?" And so on through the Scriptures, God is presented as a just God. I know he's a loving God, but he's also a just God. This is one thing the liberals have forgotten. So Paul was not begging the question when he said, "For then how shall God judge the world?" He's giving something that was plainly axiomatic to them all, and thus no plausible argument can overthrow that. No fallacy in reasoning here.

The sinner cannot claim merit when God uses his unrighteousness to serve his ends. It's God who gets the credit. God uses it for his own purposes. God judges strictly on the merits of a case. He is just. It reminds me of the story of a judge who opened a court case with this little announcement to the defendant and his counsel, and to the prosecuting attorney and those associated with him. He said, "Gentlemen, I have in my hand two checks," and with that he raised two checks. He says, "One of them here is for fifteen thousand dollars from the defendant, and the other is ten thousand dollars from the prosecuting attorney." He said, "I want you to know at the beginning of the case I'm going to give five thousand dollars back to the defendant, because I want to judge this case strictly on its merits." [Laughter] Now, God judges strictly on the merits of a case without any checks in hand. It is always what is just.

Now, I want you to notice another incidental thing that we may derive clearly from this passage. Verse 6 says, "For then how shall God judge the world?" Probably the heresy of modern mainline Christianity that has penetrated more Protestant churches than any other is the heresy of universalism. That is that everybody is ultimately going to be in heaven. It has so penetrated our modern mainline churches that in our liberal churches it

is rare to find a minister who does not believe in universalism, ultimately. That's why we always hear, "God is love." And we so rarely hear, "God is just." God is love, but God is just is forgotten. God is so loving that he will overrule, ultimately, all rejection of him, and everybody is going to be in heaven some day. There is no such thing as hell, as these fighting fundamentalists speak of hell. But rather, God is loving. That is one of the greatest of the heresies that is prominent in our churches today.

John Knight, a retired Presbyterian minister, said a few years ago speaking of the universalists, "Life, they say is just a play upon the stage of history, the universalist says. After the play is over, all the actors, even the devil himself, will be in heaven to take their little bow. God would not hurt anyone!" Then he pronounces his own judgment upon it. He says, "Sentiment has superseded Scripture. Rationalism has routed revelation. The uncertain beneficence of mortal man has taken the place of the righteous judgments of a holy God." Paul didn't teach universalism or universal salvation; he taught universal judgment. He taught that all men would ultimately have their actions judged by God.

And incidentally, my Christian friends, you must not think that what Paul meant by that was simply that the unbelieving man is going to be judged. For the Scriptures make very plain that the unbelieving man will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. But the Scriptures lay a great deal of stress upon the fact that even believers must ultimately have a judgment for themselves. And that's a terrifying thing, too. For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ to receive the things that we have done in our bodies, whether they be good or worthless. So the Scriptures teach that God is going to judge the world.

The Bible teaches universal judgment, not universal salvation. And our Lord Jesus Christ did not accept universal salvation. He said, with reference to Judas, "For the Son of Man goeth even as it is written of him, but woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed. Good were it for that man if he had not been born." But if Judas was ultimately to be in the presence of the Lord, he could never say "Good were it for that

man if he had not been born," because if everybody is ultimately going to be in the presence of the Lord, no matter what we endure for a time, it would be of insignificance in comparison with the time spent throughout all eternity in the presence of the Lord. If we should say that a person should pass into a kind of purgatory, but ultimately would be in the presence of the Lord, it would be as only a speck on the line of eternal time. And it could never be said, "Good were it for that man if he had not be born," if he's to spend eternity in the presence of the Lord. It's the greatest blessing in the world for him to be born in order to enjoy that. But the fact that Jesus said, "Good were it for that man, if he had not been born," is proof of the fact that he believed in universal judgment, not universal salvation. As the poet put it, "Who counts the billows when the shore is won?"

Now, the second question is phrased for us, very simply I think out of the two questions in verses 7 and 8, by is it right to judge sinners who glorify God? Now, this is just the same question with a slightly different emphasis. The emphasis now rests on man, not so much on God. He says in the 7th verse, "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, Let us do evil that good may come? Whose damnation is just." It's very simple, if I have, by my disobedience caused the truth and faithfulness of God to abound, then why am I judged as a sinner. Why should we not say, let us do evil that good may come? The more evil we do, the more glory God will have, and thus, let's do evil that good may come, so that through our continuing and evil, and his continuing manifestation of faithfulness and grace to us, he will get more and more and more glory. The slogan, "Let us do evil, that good may come," Paul says was one they'd used against him. That's what they said about Paul. "He's the fellow who preaches, 'Let's do evil that good may come.'"

Now, the apostle has turned the judgment of the world into the judgment of an individual here in verse 7. He had said, "For then how shall God judge the world?" But in verse 7, he says, "F or if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" So that he individualizes the world, letting

us know, incidentally, that no one is going to escape this judgment. I think he has in mind the last judgment. The answer that the apostle gives to this absurd conclusion of the objectors is an answer that is given in one cutting stroke. He says, "Whose condemnation is just." "Why is he so brief?" asks Karl Barth, and then answers, "Because fools and inconsistent fools in particular can and should be answered briefly. And in that long question everything is foolish, everything is wrong."

Now, I had a student at the theological seminary some years ago, a very good student, teaching at one of our Christian colleges today, a very good man. He's written a very good commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. And I was pleased to read it, because I had been one of his instructors on the Epistle to the Romans, having taught him the Greek text, or at least he was in the class when I taught the Greek text of the Epistle to the Romans. It's not often that a professor gets a chance to criticize his students' writings, and so I just want to make one slight criticism of a very good work. He says concerning that last clause, "Whose condemnation is just," that the apostle gives a rather rude slap across the cheek of the objectors. I don't think Paul gives a rather rude slap across the cheek of his objectors, but he does give a rather cutting carefully cutting, incisive rejection of their views, "whose condemnation is just."

Once when Calvin Coolidge was Vice President, and presiding over the senate, an altercation arose between some of the senators. Tempers began to flare, and one senator finally said to the other senator, "You can go straight to hell." Or "Go straight to hell." Well, the offended senator was taken aback by it, and he got up out of his chair, he stormed down toward Mr. Coolidge who was sitting in his place presiding, thumbing or leafing through a book. And he marched up to Mr. Coolidge and he said, "Mr., President, did you hear what he said to me?" And Mr. Coolidge looked up from his book and said calmly, "You know, I've been leafing through the rule book here, and you don't have to go." [Laughter]

Now, the apostle says here that this kind of reasoning is inconsistent with diving judgment, and he does say, however, if you hold to this kind of reasoning, you do have to go. In other words, this kind of reasoning is the product of a deranged mind spiritually, "whose condemnation or judgment is just." I also read, when I was doing a little studying after I wrote up the message for this week, in a book in which there was a story about Chicago's Presbyterian McCormick Theological Seminary, named because of Cyrus McCormick, who was I think the founding father of International Harvester. And they had been supported and endowed by the products of that man's inventive genius, and also his company. A professor was showing a visitor around in McCormick seminary, and he said finally, "By the way, we never refer to the Grim Reaper around here; it's always the International Harvester." [Laughter] Well, when the Bible speaks about judgment, it does speak about a judgment for those who reject the revelation of the word of God. Paul says, "Whose judgment is just." Divine judgment is something that all the Bible supports, and it's something that we need to keep before us constantly.

There is a story about a man who was on a scaffold; his name was Johnson, on a scaffold eight stories high in Chicago, when he heard something snap. And he saw his partner fall. And he felt himself falling through space. And he said afterwards, "My whole life flashed before me. It was very clear. I could remember when I was a kid, but it happened so fast that I can't remember much of it now." He happened to seize wildly at a hanging cable and found himself perched on top of an air conditioner, and managed to get through the window. As for going up again on that scaffold he said, "That's it for me. I'll never go up again. I've got to find a new trade. It's hard to explain how terrified I was." If you've ever been in any situation like that, I have. When your life flashes before you, you know something of the terror of eternal judgment. That's what Paul is speaking about here, "For then how shall God judge the world? Whose condemnation is just." This slanderous abuse that the ungodly are responsible for is monstrous. Evil is evil. No

matter what God may bring for it. And the ideas of libertinism and antinomianism are ideas that cannot be for one moment supported by human reason.

John Calvin said, "Their perversity was to be condemned on two accounts. First, because this impiety had gained their mental assent; and second, because in slandering the gospel, they dared to draw from it their calumny from that source." Well, there's a fine irony in concluding this section with "whose condemnation is just," because speaking primarily of Jewish objectors, the apostle has right around to what he said in chapter 2, verse 1. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." God is going to judge according to those principles of judgment, which arise out of the fundamental equity of his nature. And he will judge Gentile, and he will judge Jew, and there is no escape. There is no way to reason out of the difficulty in which sinners find themselves. And the fact that God causes his grace and his glory to redound through the sinfulness of men, is not credit to men; it is credit to God, but not to men. We face eternal judgment.

If you are here this morning, and you think for one moment that you shall escape eternal judgment, you shall be sadly mistaken. Even things about us testify to eternal judgment. If we did not have the word of God, we could bring strong arguments to bear, not convincing, but strong arguments to bear that judgment is eternal. There are natural reasons, if we look at the physical universe about us; it is crowded through with jagged points of orthodoxy. Aren't roses beautiful? But they decay. The sky is beautiful on a beautiful day, but when fought lightning against a flash, the sky becomes different. Birds are lovely fowls to look at until one sees a hawk. Mountains are beautiful to gaze upon until they belch forth fire and ashes as Mt. St. Helens. The sea is magnificent and awe inspiring when one stands in front of it. I can never forget that first look at the Atlantic Ocean. One is impressed by the grandeur and the magnificence of that tremendous body of water. But when tidal waves come, the sea becomes a terror. Volcanoes themselves

speak of a kind of fiery judgment. The twinkles of the stars, the light of the sun and moon, which are just storms of fire, suggest eternal conflagration. The testimony of history shows that God is love, but also that he is a consuming fire himself. We have Washington, Lincoln, Lee, and [Laughter] but on the other hand we have Hitler, Stalin, Gaddafi, Khomeini. Paul is right; the goodness of God is followed by the severity of God.

There is the testimony of the human mind. Goodness in the childish laughter, nothing more thrilling than to see a little child laugh for joy. Holy memories, lovely music, rapturous imagination, but on the other hand the severity of God manifested in the guilty conscious, anguish, remorse, tragedy, bereavement; it's almost as if God is speaking of his goodness and severity in nature. And then as far as reason is concerned, eternal judgment is necessary because of God's holiness. It would be anarchy to be indifferent to those who stand on the side of goodness, and to make no difference between that and those who stand on the side of evil. God would be strengthening the hands of the evil; it is a necessary motive for obedience. Noah as moved with godly fear when he built his ark. It's a necessary thing, because of the endlessness of guilt. There's no such thing as guilty for ten days, except in our human courts. When a man sins against the Lord God, having sinned against an infinite being, his sin is an infinite sin. And consequently, it is endless in its nature.

The idea that we shall be guilty only for a time is something that we have in human reason. It is Hibernian, but it is not biblical. And so in the very endlessness of guilt argues for the endlessness of divine punishment. It's absurd to ask how long are we guilty of a crime against the infinite God. There is no repentance even in hell, for even there men gnash with their teeth against the Lord God. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," the New Testament says. And sin is an infinite evil, because it's committed against an infinite person. To torture a beast is not good. To torture a man is worse. To sin against a king is greater. But to sin against God is an infinite sin. There is no escaping it. And my dear friend, we have all sinned against an infinite God, thus we

are all infinitely guilty. And the only escape is the cross of Jesus Christ. To flee to the cross is to receive a salvation that is infinite in its forgiveness, in its justification, and in its satisfaction. Come to Christ. Receive the forgiveness of sins, which is eternal. And be delivered from eternal judgment. May we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] We are so grateful to Thee Lord, for these words that the apostle has written. It is very difficult for us to comprehend that someone should say against the biblical teaching, that its doctrine has let us do evil that good may come. We know the marvelous grace that has been manifested to us, and we know that Thou art glorified in the manifestation of Thy grace. But we take no credit for that. It all belongs to Thee. We are sinners. We are lost, and we are undone. We can only fall at Thy feet and praise Thee for the wonderful grace shown to us. And we pray, Lord, if there are some in this audience who have to come to the despair of salvation through human means, that they may see through the Holy Spirit the divine remedy in the Lord Jesus Christ, and may...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]