



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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

Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Lessons from the Life of David

2 Samuel 23

“David’s Last Prophetic Words”

TRANSCRIPT

Returning to 2 Samuel chapter 23 and reading verse 1 through verse 7 for our Scripture reading. We’re drawing near the end of our studies in the Life of David and as you probably can tell from the heading in your text, these verses have to do with “David’s Last Prophetic Words.” Verse 1 of 2 Samuel chapter 23.

“Now these are the last words of David. Thus says David, the son of Jesse, ‘Thus says the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel.’”

Incidentally, the term that is translated in my text, “Thus says” it really actually means something like “a saying.” But, *na’um*, is the Hebrew expression and it is used, really, of a divine utterance. And what is interesting about it is the form and structure of these words are very similar to the prophecies that Baalam uttered, which would indicate to us that it is very likely that David, himself, was not only familiar with Baalam’s utterances, but knew them and studied them well enough so that he was guided by the Holy Spirit to use the form and structure of Baalam’s prophecies. It indicates to us that

the Old Testament figures often understood much more about earlier Scripture than we sometimes have been willing to give them credit for. Verse 2.

“The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, ‘The Rock of Israel spoke to me: ‘He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.’”

Again, in the original text and, probably, in your text too, you will notice that the translators have had a little difficulty with this prophetic section of David’s ministry in word because there are often a series of nouns that follow one after the other without the intervening words that would help to make good reading sense. For example the term, “must be just.” The term “must” is not in the original text. Actually all that the Hebrew text says is, “The one ruling over men” or actually “in men” or “among men” just. So there is actually a little bit more force on the word “just” in the original text than you might obtain from what we have in the English text.

“He who rules over men, just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain. Although my house is not so with God.”

Now, this may be rendered in another way, and most of your versions have rendered it another way, now. “Is not my house so with God.” In other words, making the statement a question rather than a concessive clause, so we’ll take that sense. “Although” instead of “Although is not my house so with God?” “For,” and again I’m rendering the little Hebrew conjunction which normally means something like, “For” in that sense here.

“For He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For this is all my salvation and all my desire; will He not make it increase? But the sons of rebellion [Again, David writes simply “rebelliousness” but properly, I think, the translators have added the word “sons” for that’s the reference.] The sons of rebellion shall all be as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands. But the man who touches them must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, and they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place.”

We won’t deal too much with those last statements, but you can see that what David is suggesting is that while he rejoices in the covenant, it is important to remember that when a ruler is just, he not only is a ruler and just in the blessings that he showers upon his people, but he also is one who must also judge. And so the wicked are referred to here as subject to the divine judgment.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for this great prophecy that David was guided by the Holy Spirit to give and make available to us. We recognize its origin as the Spirit of God, and we give Thee thanks that today, so many centuries later, we are able to read David’s prophetic message given near the end of his life.

We thank Thee for the word of God. We praise Thee for the truth that it contains, and particularly for the one whose life and ministry is the theme of the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus Christ. Accept our thanks for him. And, we pray, O God, that if there are some in this audience today who do not have the assurance of the forgiveness of sins through him and through the New Covenant, which he has ratified with his own blood,

that the Holy Spirit may be active in our meeting today as he was in David’s life and bring them to the knowledge of him, whom to know is life eternal.

May any who may be here who do not know our Lord, leave with the consciousness of sins forgiven of a Savior who ever lives to complete his work of salvation in our lives. We thank Thee for the forgiveness of our sins through the blood that was shed on Calvary’s cross.

We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon the whole church of Christ today, wherever the word of God is proclaimed. And we commit their meetings to Thee and pray that Thou will be active drawing the hearts of sinners to the Lord and blessing those who already know him and know the joy of forgiveness.

We pray for our country, for our leadership, the president and others with him in government and for our local government. We pray for them. All of these need ministry that comes from Thee.

We pray for Believers Chapel. We pray, Lord, for the ministry of the word of God over the radio, here in the assembly of the saints, in the Sunday school, around the Lord’s Table, may the Lord Jesus be exalted in our midst. We ask Thy blessing upon us now, as we sing together. And, Father, we would not forget to pray, too, for those who have requested our prayers; the sick, or some who are troubled, some who have difficult decisions to make, especially those who are grieving over the loss of loved ones, we pray for them, O God, glorify Thy name in answering the prayers of the saints. And for some who have no human hope of being delivered from their illnesses, we ask for ministry to them, comfort and consolation, the sense of Thy presence to encourage them and to lift them up. We pray that all of us as we look forward into the future may realize that our days upon this earth are numbered, and enable us, by Thy grace, to be prepared to enter into the presence of the Lord.

May our meeting be a meeting in which Thy name is exalted.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today is, “David’s Last Prophetic Words.” It may be surprising to some of us that a larger space in God’s word is given to David than to any other, except that of his great anti-type, the Lord Jesus Christ. One can see, also, in David and in that fact and some others, the beautiful harmony of Scripture.

We note, when we read the New Testament, the prominence of Christ’s death, and then, when we think of the Old Testament, with the prominence of the Old Testament sacrificial system, which foreshadows his death, we are impressed by the way in which Scripture in the Old Testament looks forward to the new. When we look at the position of the Eternal King in Zion in the New Testament, and then read the Old Testament, we are struck by the position of David, the temporal king, in the Zion of his day, and how that very fact is a foreshadowing of the reign of the Eternal King in Zion in the New Jerusalem.

Now, these are some of the last words of David. They are not his last words, but they are his last prophetic words, and so they assume unusual importance because they are last words. As you well know the last words of individuals and, frequently, important individuals, have great importance. Someone has said something to this effect that “Dying saints preach powerful sermons.” And that is often true. Just think for a moment of some of the individuals. Listen to Jacob who said to Joseph, “Behold I am dying but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and bow.” That’s not to mention the fact that Jacob called all of his sons together and gave them that marvelous prophecy that is given to us in Genesis chapter 49.

Moses, near the end of his life said, “Happy are you, O Israel, who is like you, a people saved by the Lord. The shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! Your enemies shall submit to you, and you shall tread down their high places.”

The Apostle Paul is noted for the statements that he made in his last letter to Timothy in which he said, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give to me on that day and not to me only, but also to all who have loved his appearing.” Of course, when we think of last words, we often think primarily of the Lord Jesus Christ. Among his last words were, “It is finished!” And the one I like, “Father, into Thy hands I commit my Spirit.”

I grew up in a home where I was taught as a little child to pray a little prayer, which still sticks with me off and on, “Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray, Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.” That’s Psalm 31 in verse 5, and that’s the text that the Lord Jesus cites in his last statement. “Father, into Thy hands I commit my Spirit.” That is precisely what Hebrew individuals prayed, taught their children to pray, as an evening prayer. And what is so striking about it is, it’s a kind of evening prayer in which you implicitly recognize there will come a morning, “Father, into Thy hands I commit my Spirit.”

Now, when we turn to the lost and the saved, the lost pray one way or the lost speak one way, the saved another, as they are dying. Thomas Hobbes, “I am taking a fearful leap into the dark.” Queen Elizabeth the First, “I would give millions if I did not have to die.” Mirabeau blurted out, “Give me laudanum, I don’t want to think of eternity.” Edward Gibbon, the noted atheist said, “All is dark and doubtful.” So it’s not surprising that the saints die differently. Moody said, as he was dying, “Earth is receding, heaven is opening, God is calling.” I like what Joseph Everett said, it’s very simple. He said, “Glory, glory, glory.” So the saints and the lost die in different ways. And David dies, marvelously, with these words upon his heart, as he comes to an end.

You might wonder why it is that we have to die. After all, we’ve been forgiven if we are true Christians, why is it necessary for us to die? Well, Robert L. Dabney put it very well, that well-known southern theologian of the nineteenth century said, “Why is

death a penal evil inflicted upon the justified? The true answer is that although believers are fully justified, yet, according to the plan of grace, which God has seen fit to adopt, bodily death is a necessary and wholesome chastisement for the good of the believer’s soul.”

Now, I hope when I am on my death bed, and it may not be far away, I hope when I am on my death bed I don’t say, “Martha, call nine eleven.” [Laughter] What a let down from these magnificent statements. When I walked out this morning, after having said that, someone came up to me and said, “Maybe you heard about the fellow who said, ‘I’d like to be able to call 911, but where I live they don’t have an eleven on the dial.’” [Roaring laughter]

This particular prophecy, a marvelous prophecy it is, is written near the end of the calm period that followed David’s restoration to the throne. And when he was restored, so far as we know, times were calm and near the end of the time David wrote these magnificent words. And we’re going to look at them in the remainder of our time.

And I want you to notice, first of all, in verse 1 through the first part of verse 3, David says that the words that he has given have a two-fold origin. First of all he says, “Thus says David the son of Jesse, ‘Thus says the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob and the sweet psalmist of Israel.’” These opening phrases, there are four of them, imply varied spiritual, mental, creative imagination endowments that God had given to him and which David recognizes. He, for example, speaks of himself as the anointed of the God of Jacob, looking back to the event that determined for him his rule in Israel. He calls himself one who has been “raised up on high.” I suggest that that means “raised up” in the sense of “given wisdom” for ruling over the Twelve Tribes, and, specifically, he mentions, “The sweet psalmist of Israel,” the creative imagination, an endowment which was given to Jacob which has been remarkable. These four things united in the one man and a remarkable man at that.

He goes on to mention in verse 3, the ideal ruler, which shows that David, in the midst of his ups and downs, nevertheless, had a consciousness of the solemn obligations that belong to the individual who is to be ruler in God’s people, Israel. And so he says, “He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.” No one who looks at the Bible and reflects upon what David has been given by God should pass by that statement. He is the sweet psalmist of Israel for the place of sacred song in the Christian church has its beginnings in David. If you go back to the Book of Chronicles, particularly, and read of the remarkable changes, or additions, to the worship of Israel that are traceable to David, you can understand how important the churches felt, with reference to the gift of music, and the psalms that have come from King David.

So when we sing our hymns, when we sing our songs in the Christian church, a great deal of the tradition concerning it goes all the way back to King David, the sweet psalmist of Israel. As you probably know, in places in this globe at the present time, there are individuals who sing only the psalms of David. If you go up in the north of Scotland, particularly, and there are still churches there that gather on Sunday morning, generally are Presbyterian in background, and they will sing the psalms of David. And that has been a tradition of a long time among many godly people in the highlands of that land. So David is the sweet psalmist of Israel; and no one who studies the Bible can fail to appreciate the Psalms.

I sat down last night and read about ten of them in a section that I wanted to read, and I could not help but think of my grandmother when I went to see her when she was on her deathbed, and her Bible was right by the side of her bed. She was a very diligent member of the First Methodist Church of Jasper, Alabama. And I walked in and picked up her Bible, read a passage from the Bible, but I noted, particularly, her Bible and the Psalms, especially. Obviously, she had opened those psalms and read them continuously for a lengthy period of time; if you looked at her Bible that was the dark side of the outside where she had spent a great deal of her time. I’m not sure how much she

understood about some of the technical things of Christian theology, although she truly understood the Lord and his saving work for her, but one thing she did appreciate were those magnificent psalms that David had written, which spoke so much to her and to her life in her last years in which she lived alone.

Now, he goes on to say that not only is he the speaker of these last words but, he says, that there is a divine author of the words, and that’s far more important. For he says in verse 2, “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, ‘The Rock of Israel spoke to me.’”

Now, you might think that since in the Old Testament we have so few references, specifically, to the Holy Spirit that the Holy Spirit was not altogether active in the Old Testament. And, in fact, some have even sought to support that idea. But you can see from this that David is no stranger to the Spirit’s influence. In fact, in the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm that he wrote, one of the things that he prayed was that God would not take his Holy Spirit from him. And then the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 22, on the Day of Questions, made reference to one of David’s psalms and he spoke about David giving those psalms in the Spirit. So David was no stranger to the Spirit’s influence, as he puts it here.

You know, there are two facts that come or emerge, as far as I’m concerned, from this, one is this: that we do not really know our debt to the Spirit’s influence. Now, we can, of course, say the words, but, often, we do not really have much of an understanding of how much the Holy Spirit does minister to us. He’s responsible for our perseverance. He’s responsible for our highest thoughts. He’s responsible for our purest feelings. He’s responsible for the general growth and sanctification or in spiritual excellence, if we have such growth. He is the one to whom we should give thanks through, in the word of God, for that work.

You also can tell from this how the non-Christian world does not know the great work, which the Spirit achieves in Christian lives. If we, ourselves, understand so little of how indebted we are to the Spirit, how much less the world. No wonder Jesus said, with

reference to the Holy Spirit, “The world knoweth him not,” John chapter 14 in verse 17. So it becomes us to remember that we owe to him all of the growth and grace that we experience. The ministry of the Spirit, in conviction and conversion, we owe to him. And we also owe to him his constant action in our hearts that we might grow in the knowledge of our great God.

Someone has said that, “Religion is at a low ebb whenever the work of the Holy Spirit is forgotten.” And we are not talking about the dancing and the clapping and the kinds of things that we often see today on the TV screen, we are talking about the important work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believing individuals. So David says then, “These words that I am giving are words that come from me, but they come, essentially, from the Holy Spirit as well.”

Now, he talks about the character of the King that is to come. Now, remember, David has committed his great sin, and he’s humbled by his past failures. He’s assured of forgiveness, for the Prophet Nathan has spoken to him and has said that God has forgiven his sin, but now humbled by the experience that he’s had, the sweet psalmist reflects on the ideal ruler. And he says about this ideal ruler that two things characterize him. First of all, he must be just, he must be righteous. And then, second, he must minister in the fear of God.

Now, I think that’s so important as you look around in our society today and look at our particular rulers and presidents and others; how significant this would be if we had some kind of universal recognition of the word of God. Morality and spirituality must be siblings. The supreme regard for the will of God is the important thing for any politician. All humans, of course, have failed to this point; but there is one coming who will not fail, that is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And I, when I think about this, I think of what Isaiah among, and this is not the only place that we find this, but Isaiah in prophesying of the king who would come, makes the very points that David makes. He says.

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.”

The Messianic King, related to David, the Lord, Jesus Christ is a king who is characterized by those two facets: justice and he ministers in the fear of God.

Have you ever noticed when you read the lives of the kings and emperors, and then when you read the lives of the presidents how, frequently, in the course of the writing of biographies, they will comment on the great achievements of the rulers and the emperors, but then, always, inevitably there will be sections in which it is obvious, and obvious to the author even though he may be writing something very laudatory, that the individual has ultimately failed. There is only one ruler who shall never fail, and that is the Messianic King of whom David speaks. And I love the way in which he describes his rule. “He shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds.” What the light of the morning is and what the rich, natural world suggest, these are the effects of the just rule of, just rule of the king that shall come.

What does “morning” suggest to you? Well, morning suggests to me, safety. I do not like to walk around in the dark. Well, maybe in my own yard, but as far as darkness is concerned, darkness is a peril. And that’s one reason why you don’t go walking around in the city of Dallas in the dark, places you don’t know. But when the sun comes out, you naturally feel safer. So as David writes, “He shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises.” Safety! Cheerfulness!

Now, I have a wife; she greets me every morning by saying, “Good morning!” Cheerful. And, I, slowly reply. [Laughter] But, nevertheless, the morning suggests safety. It suggests cheerfulness. I’ll try to do better, Martha. It suggests activity. It suggests usefulness. All of those things characterize it. David is talking about that very thing. “He’ll be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like the tender grass springing out of the earth.” What does that suggest? Well, that suggests such things as luscious growth, wealth because when the ground is productive, and for those who work the ground, that’s wealth, that’s provision. That’s God’s provision, of course. So that’s suggested by the fact that the ground is fruitful and productive, wealth, beauty. It’s lovely to look out on a morning and see the growth of the plants that you have planted, which are beautiful. And then for the farmers, those who work the ground, to see the grain and other things grow, suggests beauty to them, as well, as well as fruitfulness and productiveness. The most perfect illustration of all of this is the rule of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and David describes it in terms that will be meaningful particularly to people who were such as the Israelites were.

But now, in verses 5 through 7, he comes to the important thing for him. And here he talks about his confidence regarding the kingdom that is to come. Now, for those of you who are here for the first time, you will not, of course, know that in the series on David when we came to 2 Samuel chapter 7, we spent five messages on that one chapter which had to do with the Davidic Covenant. We talked about the covenant and then we talked about David’s prayer, in which he prayed, among other things, that God would bring to pass the blessings that had been promised to him.

Now, he had as we pointed out then or as you have read in your own reading of Scripture, that Samuel was the one through whom David was anointed king. Samuel was given information by the Lord God and told that David was the one. And he was anointed as the king that was to come and Saul’s place as king was taken away from him. And then Nathan in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of 2 Samuel gave that marvelous prophecy, or rather, it

was a marvelous statement from him, in which the Davidic Covenant was set forth in its terms. Listen to some of the statements, “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. But My mercy shall never depart from you” or, “from him,” the ruler, “And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”

So now, David near the end of his life, having that in his mind, talks about the blessing of the covenant that has been given to him. And he says, “Is not my house so with God?” As the blessings that I’ve just been talking about, “Is not my house so with God; for he has made with me an everlasting covenant.” It’s interesting, we pointed out this, that the term “everlasting” was not used when the covenant was first given to him but here it is used. And it was something that was implied in the other because you cannot have a kingdom and a throne and a house promised to you with reference to the future if you do not have an everlasting covenant. So it was implied, but now it is specifically stated. It was an everlasting covenant. Now, this covenant he describes then as an “everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure.”

Now, the covenant that God made with David was a personal covenant. That is, it was made with him specifically and with his seed. He would have a house, he would have a kingdom, and they would be eternal. It was, also, and incidentally here in verse 5 it’s personal, too, he says, “Yet he has made with me, with me an everlasting covenant.” So it was a personal covenant, but it also was an official covenant, too, because he was the chosen king, and God gave him the needed skills in order to minister.

If you look at David’s kingdom and his rule, while he failed in many ways, generally, he was a just and faithful ruler. In fact, I’m sure that Israel would have loved to have had that kind of ruler always. So he stood out in that respect. But he stood out as the official king; God gave needed skills to carry out his work. And, also, the covenant

was Messianic. That is, the office of David was typical. It was not God’s ultimate. God was pointing forward in David’s rule to the one who would, ultimately, come as David’s greater son.

So his office looked on to the earthly kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as described in the later portions of the Old Testament. We looked at them in our study of 2 Samuel chapter 7, now, so I’ll just look at two or three things that we may underline here.

First of all, it’s everlasting; and we made the point which has meant so much to me that when we realize that when we talk about an everlasting covenant, specifically, an everlasting house, an everlasting kingdom, an everlasting throne, a promise made to David, what does that necessarily imply? Well, it necessarily implies that someone coming from David’s line will live forever. You could not have an everlasting throne, an everlasting house, an everlasting kingdom if someone is not going to be an infinite person, living forever. So in the promise itself, there is the strong implication that an eternal person will come to be the king, to sit on David’s throne, and to rule forever. That’s obvious if you just think about it for a while. You would not have an everlasting throne, an everlasting kingdom if people were dying. So an everlasting kingdom demands an everlasting person. And when the Lord, Jesus Christ came, the New Testament makes it very plain. And if you study his life and ministry, he is the everlasting king to sit on David’s throne to rule and reign forever.

But David also says that this covenant is “ordered in all things.” Now, isn’t that interesting? Ordered in all things; in other words, the execution of all of the details for the accomplishment of the covenant have been foreordained by the Lord God. They are fore ordained and because they are foreordained, they are foreseen. God sees before hand because he has foreordained. He does not foreordain because he foresees. If you think for a moment, you will know that He knows what is going to happen and sees it coming because he has determined that it should come. Foreordination precedes

foreknowledge in that sense. So it is a foreordained execution and a foreseen execution of all things, the result being that all of the providential details necessary for the carrying out of the prophecies are guaranteed by our triune God in heaven.

When the Lord Jesus was speaking to the disciples on the Emmaus road, he said some things to them that underline that fact. He said, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!” Incidentally, it’s perfectly admissible for you to put your name in that text. “Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” All of the things that were ordered by the Lord God to bring him to the place where he has now come; the cross, the death, the resurrection and the certain blessings that are to come.

When Peter talks in the sermon on the Day of Pentecost in the somewhat similar fashion, he is talking about the same thing that David is talking about when he says “ordered in all thing and sure.” For Peter says in chapter 2 of the Book of Acts in verse 22, in the great sermon, “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves also know him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God.” Notice the order, incidentally; determined purpose and then foreknowledge because of the determined purpose. “Foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” And so on through the rest of the teaching of the word of God.

And, thirdly, he says, “secure,” or sure. “Ordered in all things and secure.” Why are these all things “secure”? Well, in the first place, he’s already called the God that he’s talking about here “The Rock of Israel,” and that itself suggests that any thing that he determines to do is going to be sure. And we know, of course, that that is so. It rests then, this covenant, upon the unchangeable faithfulness of an all wise and all powerful

God. As we rang the changes on this a few weeks back, this covenant is an unconditional covenant and it is grounded in the divine word of God.

Secure! Sure! I wonder how David felt when he thought about this great covenant as being one that was “sure” or “secure,” reflecting on his own frailty, on the dangers of the life that he had lived, the sins that he had committed. And, nevertheless, knowing God’s faithfulness to his covenantal work, he can talk about the covenant that has to do with him as being something that is sure, secure. And I would like to say that I think that David, if he had written more, he would have said, “Nothing can compare with the preciousness of this relationship to the Lord God.” That’s why he says, right here, in a few moments, “For this is all my salvation and all my desire.” In fact, that expression in the Hebrew text, *shephets*, may be rendered, “all good pleasure,” referring to God’s good pleasure in determining that these things come to pass. “This is all my salvation and all my desire, will he not bring it to pass.”

In this, I suggest to you, we have common experience with David. Our hearts are saddened and pained by our shortcomings. We do sin. We do not sin once. We sin often. Anyone who understands the word of God knows that when the word of God speaks concerning the ministry that is pleasing to the Lord, most of us fall constantly if we are honest with ourselves. We have common experience with him. We are pained by our shortcomings. We see perils to our salvation on every side. The resolutions that we frame for the future partake of our infirmity. The struggle that we have in the Christian life is a constant struggle; it never ends, so far as I can tell, as long as we are in the flesh. And I’ve been here a long time as a Christian, over, well, fifty years now, in Christ. And I still struggle and I know it. And if you have any question about it, ask Martha. Ask anyone who knows me. They know I’m still struggling. But the bruised and crushed spirit finds healing and rest in this; that God is true, and he’s resolved to save us, and save us by his grace and the blessed knowledge that we have that Christ’s saving, sacrificial

and atoning work is sufficient for sinners, is that to which I cling and that upon which I depend for eternity.

Now, I know a person says, “Well, if you are so confident that the things that have been determined by the Lord shall come to pass, then what does that do? Does not that suggest in that it produces indifference or carelessness?” I suggest an individual who knows that, does not know what it is to have such confidence. Does not know what it is to have been a sinner and to have been delivered from his sin; does not know what it means to be grateful for what God has done through Christ, if an individual understands what God has done and how grateful or how marvelous he has been to him, and what gratitude that produces, he can understand completely how he can be saddened and troubled by his sin, but confident in Christ that he will eventually enter into the presence of the Lord. We have abundant consolation; and it’s not abundant consolation that frees us to go out and sin. It’s just the opposite. It’s abundant consolation that makes us hate the sins that from time to time we do commit.

David in the latter part of that verse says, “For this is all my salvation, and all my desire.” You can tell that for him the regal splendor of being the king was not the thing that moved him. The thing that moved him was the divine kingdom and not all the trappings that have gone along with kingdoms and presidencies down through the years.

As the Lord Jesus said, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.” I fully believe as I’ve read so many of David’s Psalms and read the story of his life that the one thing that David wanted to do, which he failed to do from time to time, was to be pleasing to the Lord God.

And, incidentally, some have suggested that David, at first, thought that he was going to be the ruler. But it’s evident now that he’s distinguished between himself and the ruler that is to come. He makes a difference between the one who is coming and his own subjectivity. For he says, “This is all my salvation, all my desire, will he not make it increase.” And he talks about another individual rather than simply of himself. The plight

of the wicked is described very briefly in verses 6 through 7. They are men of Belial as over against men of the covenant. “The life of the wicked,” he says, “is like thorns.” It’s as barren as thorny ground. It’s as noxious as thorny ground. It’s as fleeting in power as the thorns. In fact, he writes a psalm about this very point, in Psalm 37, and says, “The wicked,” and he describes them in a similar way and says, “They shall one day be no more.” And so he makes the statement there.

Our time is just about up, let me just sum up. The relation of David to our Lord then is one of hereditary connection; he is from Jesse, as was our Lord. It’s one of typical representation is office: David the King, representing the King that is to come, the Lord, Jesus Christ. Historical resemblance, there was a great resemblances between them because David’s career, in some ways, is similar to our Lord’s career. He was rejected and then was received back to sit upon the throne. The Lord Jesus came as the greater son of David, rejected by the people of God, but brought back to rule and sit upon the throne forever, now waiting at the right hand of the Father in heaven, until all of his enemies be brought in subjection to his feet. What a contrast, however, in the two individuals: David, magnificent man, all these magnificent gifts to him; but our Lord Jesus, the holy, harmless, undefiled savior of men.

In these last words then, there is a kind of glorious anticipation of the kingdom of God. I must say that I often read things written by Old Testament scholars today and I sometimes find it very difficult for individuals to write about the Old Testament and not make connections with the New Testament fulfillment. We often hear Old Testament scholars say, “We must interpret the Old Testament as the Old Testament is written.” I agree. I agree with that. But that often becomes simply a study of the Old Testament and no linkage is made with the New Testament. I do not think that we give an accurate interpretation of any passage of the word of God until, ultimately, we relate it to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for he’s the one who makes the point. “They wrote of me.” And we made the point today and I am not disappointed in having to make that point at all.

Last words, well Joshua’s last words were great words. He said, “Behold this day I am going the way of all the earth.” And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord, your God, spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.

Simeon came by the Spirit into the temple and when the parents of our Lord brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms, blessed God and said, “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word. For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel.” How much better that is than nine eleven? And then, Stephen, “They stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”” He knelt down and cried with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said that, he fell asleep.

You know, there is one thing that we can be sure of, my Christian friend and my non-Christian friend too, we walk many different ways in life. You do not live the life I live, I do not live the life you live. You did not have the great privilege of growing up in Alabama and South Carolina. [Laughter] You have the great privilege of growing up in Texas or some other place, and you feel the same way I do about the place in which I grew up. But there is one thing in which we are all united, and it’s this: We shall die, unless our Lord comes, but we shall die. We are different in many, many ways but we are united in that one thing: We are united in the experience of death.

May God in his marvelous grace help us to remember that and, also, so move us that we are prepared to face that fact with confidence regarding the future. You can do that through that which Jesus Christ has accomplished in his saving death on Calvary’s Cross. We are sinners. We are still sinners. But Christ has died for sinners and has made it possible for sinners to have eternal life.

Come to Christ. “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,” he said and still says, I think. “Come unto me.” Believe in him. Acknowledge your need of him! Acknowledge your lack of trust and anything else, joining the church, praying through, the ordinances, your good works, your culture, your education; all of the things in which we tend to trust. Abandon them. Trust in Christ and the blood that was shed for sinners, and enjoy the assurance of everlasting life.

We invite you, as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus, to trust in him.

Let’s stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these magnificent words that King David wrote. How we admire that godly man, with all of his failures a godly man, who desired to please Thee, who did often please Thee. Through whom Thou hast done great and mighty deeds. But we, especially, adore the one who came from David, as far as the flesh is concerned, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who came to accomplish the great work by which the covenant was made secure and sure.

Lord, if there should be someone here who has not believed in Christ, so move in their hearts that they turn to him whom to know is life eternal. O God, may the decision be made now as ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.