



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Lessons from Mike Black

Ecclesiastes 7: 15-29

Lesson 9 of 16

2007-08

"In Search Of The Righteous"

TRANSCRIPT

This is our ninth lesson in the book of Ecclesiastes and our text tonight begins in Chapter 7, verse 15, and we will run to the end of the chapter tonight. But due to the length of our material, I will not read the text as we do in classic exposition. I ask you to mark a couple of texts that I think will add to our study tonight and they are in Psalm 90 and Psalm 92.

Our Teacher, 'the man with the powerful mind', has been leading us through his observations and discussions of life 'under the sun'. He has done so with many high and mighty thoughts. Last week, in particular, we remember his lengthy message on the sovereignty of God and the inability of man. God's all-wise Providence guiding and guarding us in all of our affairs; our times are in His hands.

Tonight, our Teacher will impart some of his most radically sounding advice. Just notice verse 17: He cautions against exceeding 'wickedness and folly'. And we think: 'Well, that's relatively simple, isn't it?' Until we look up one verse north, (vs16) and he tells us to guard against 'excessive righteousness and wisdom'. Then in verse 28 he tells us that 'there is only one man in 1000 who is righteous but no women are righteous'. Now, what's that all about?! Before I started this study I used to have a lot more hair and I used to be a lot nicer person; at least that's what my wife tells me.

The structure of our lesson tonight falls out into three divisions. The first (verses 15 – 22) is divine retribution. Then we have in verses 23 and 24 our second part which is inaccessible wisdom. Finally, our third section (vs 25 – 29) is seeking but not finding.

So that’s the structure that we will attempt to tackle tonight. Let’s bow for a moment of prayer before we begin our lesson.

Father, we are very grateful to be together again around the Word of God. Thank you for the communion and fellowship of the saints who love to hear the scriptures and who know that in learning them, they will have the skill for living life ‘under the sun’. Thank you that this ‘man with the powerful mind’ was raised up to give us these insights on the ‘horizontal plane’. We pray, with the power of the Holy Spirit, that you will use his thoughtful insights to guide us to better understand this life that we are given to live. We pray this to the end that Jesus Christ might be glorified in our lives and through our lives. May we be better participants in this life ‘under the sun’ for His kingdom’s sake: For Your kingdom is eternal and all glorious; and we know that one day we shall be there for a blissful reunion with Him. It is to that end that we pray. Amen.

The first verse of our study tonight (vs15) will be our Teacher’s observations concerning retribution; upon which he bases his instruction for the next few verses (and I am tracking right along with him on this one). Here is an illustration, or an observation if you will, of a faithful man of the church; a godly man. And he is put through some horrible suffering: Say a horrible disease; and his life is just hanging on and on. We pray and ask, ‘Why doesn’t God just take him in His kindness and grace?’ But He doesn’t and his life just seems to languish. We see the suffering of the righteous and we wonder: ‘Why is God, in His grace, taking them through this?’ That is exactly what our ‘teacher with a powerful mind’ observed.

Yet while he observed this suffering with one eye, his other eye was observing the profane and the wicked; and they were just prospering right along. They had ‘Mr. Bluebird’ on their shoulder and they were just whistling a tune. The verb ‘observed’, (‘seen’ in NIV, vs15a) highlights his experience of life ‘under the sun’. Here is a righteous person perishing in his righteousness and there is a wicked person living long in his evil. We think that this is the polar opposite of the way things should be in a world that God

designed. For His Word particularly reveals to us in the legal portions of the law, (for example; Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 4:40) that if one follows The Word then he will have a blessed life. Proverbs 3:1&2: ‘Righteousness leads to life’ so says our book of wisdom. While in Psalm 1 (vs4-6) ‘The wicked suffer and die; they perish’. That’s Psalm 1; the beginning of the psalter itself! What’s going on here? Why is life ‘under the sun’ so perplexing? Our ‘Teacher with a powerful mind’ is struggling with this conflict. Now Asaph, in Psalm 73, was also dealing with the observation of the prosperity of the wicked. Yet our Teacher does not reach the resolution that Asaph did. Rather, his counsel (vs 16): “Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise—why destroy yourself?”

Now, we need to understand his term ‘righteous’. The righteousness of which he speaks is not the legal righteousness of the book of Romans: And we know that for certain because biblically, we know that man cannot make himself a righteous person. It is untenable. Man is wicked by nature. See again our lesson last week (7:13b): ‘...who can straighten what He has made crooked or bent?’

Rather, I think what he’s talking about here is self-righteousness; the pretense that one ‘has God’: And that he has gotten his relationship to that ‘God’ completely figured out. If a truly Godly man cannot understand how the wicked have protracted periods of prosperity, then certainly the self-righteous won’t have a clue(vs15).

So who are these self-righteous purveyors of our day, anyway, so that we can mark them out and get a bead on them; to study and ponder them? Well, I think that we can see them today. They are the ones telling us, with some certainty, that ‘You are not rich’ because ‘you don’t give enough to our ministries’. These self-righteous ones I would call the ‘glad, clad preachers’ of our day that blind us with the reflection of their Rolex watches. They have in each and every instance ‘God figured out’. Their gospel: ‘God wants you healed, happy, and wealthy.’ They tell us things like: ‘Now friends, if you’ll just look down that aisle, here comes a basket; and your faith commitment to this message of mine will be a faith commitment that God will honor right now’.

I know that I don’t need to say in a place like Believers Chapel that you need to stay away from people like that. You know that instinctively. You don’t need to taste a

rotten egg to know that it's corrupt, you can merely smell it and tell. Notice the warning, which follows hard on the heels of his observation: (vs 16b) “...why destroy yourself?”: For this is the end result of those who think they have ‘God figured out’. They are the people in the New Testament that I believe the apostle is talking about when he said: ‘their god is their belly’ (Rom 16:18 NKJV). In other words, they are self-serving; they have appetites for themselves and they are really not interested in the affairs of other people. They have an agenda and they drive it. Verse 17. With the same syntactical structure he highlights the same poles of contrast; namely, one should avoid excessive ‘wickedness and folly’.

So then, what we have in verses 16&17 are four characteristic traits: righteousness, wisdom, wickedness, and folly. Observe the first three traits are all ‘qualified’: Overrighteous, overwise, and overwicked. These traits are all ‘qualified’. But folly is not qualified. So what does that mean?

I think it can only lead to one conclusion and that is that ‘folly’ is not talking about any specific act or attitude; but rather a life or a lifestyle in itself. Folly, the life of a fool, is to be avoided completely. ‘We avoid every appearance of evil’ said the apostles (e.g. 2Tim 3:2-7) in the New Testament. Rather, ‘we run in such a way that we can gain the prize’, said the apostle (1Cor 9:24). Very interestingly, we next see that our ‘man with the powerful mind’ envisions a premature end for the fool: “...why die before your time?” (vs17b).

I recall our word time. We’ve done a bit of study on that word in our exposition of Ecclesiastes; and I remind you again that time is a ‘sovereignly, ordained event’: That is its use. We shall not live out more days than He has assigned for us to live. We know that for that is the point of the word time. And yet, in the ‘here and now’, we have the responsibility to hear the Word of God and to ponder its warnings. This is our responsibility: “...why die before your time?”. I think God leaves us examples in our lifetime, in space and in time, to bring us illustrations of this very warning. We learn wisdom by ‘the seeing eye and the hearing ear’. That’s the book of Proverbs. ‘We walk

by the field of the sluggard’; and we observe and learn (Prov 24: 30-34). So God gives us pictures to learn from in our life experience and it corresponds directly to His Word.

Chris Farley, the overweight, out of shape, young comedian from *Saturday Night Live* died in his early 30s. We have his documented 36-hour drug binge, mixed with alcohol and prostitutes. He never slept. They found him collapsed in his apartment on Michigan Avenue: Cold. “All of the excesses”, said the coroner. “That’s what killed him”. Look and learn.

After the observation of the two lines of advice(vs16&17), our Teacher provides an evaluation; Vs18: ‘Here is the best course: avoid extremes’ he says to men who would make an outward show of the religious life. ‘If you have certain convictions about a matter, don’t flaunt them’, I think he would tell us, ‘don’t act as if that makes you superior to someone else’.

In the New Testament, we have ample illustrations of this. For example, what you eat, what you drink; or in our America do you dance or do you not dance? Do you keep one day special over another day? The name ‘testament’ would tell us as believers in Christ, to take this attitude: Be humble; take the humble way; be kind, considerate, compassionate, and humble. Remember, we are all saved by grace. We’re all just trophies of grace. He chose you before the foundation of the world; out of a dark, decimated society. Then He lifted you up out of that dark world to put you on public display in your company, in your family, in your neighborhood: And He says: ‘This is My person, a trophy of My grace’. That’s what He’s doing in the world and we are all dependent on His grace alone.

Now, notice again the two interrogatives at the end of verses 16 and 17: “Why destroy yourself?” and “Why die before your time?” There is an implied penal aspect here in choosing to live life to the extreme. Regarding ‘wickedness and folly’, we need not to make any real comment, for we have no excuse whatsoever to live an ungodly life. The apostle Paul (Romans 6: 1) “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. For how can we who have died to sin live any longer in it?” So that’s out of the question.

What is he speaking about in particular then? Well, in some instances, God has been provoked and immediately ends the life of an individual. In Genesis 38, for example, the two eldest sons of Judah are addressed with the same phrase. Genesis 38:7 and Genesis 38:10, and here are your words in the NIV: 'They were wicked in the sight of the LORD, so He put them to death'. David tells us in the Psalms 55: 23: '... bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days'. In I Samuel 25, there was Nabal, the rich fool and the scripture said (vs38): "... the LORD struck Nabal and he died".

Let's don't just chalk this up to Old Testament fire and brimstone for this is New Testament doctrine as well. In Acts 5: 1-10 there were members of the church, Ananias and Safira, who lied to the Holy Spirit and were struck dead on the spot. And in Acts 12, bloody Herod came to his very last day. The scriptures say in verse 22, after sitting upon his royal throne and delivering a public address to the people, they shouted "...This is the voice of a god and not of a man". And then verse 23: "Immediately," says the scriptures, "because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died."

What's the point? The point is that I am responsible in life and I have the Word of God as my warning to look into examples of His sovereign displeasure. My days are determined, but I am responsible for those days. Am I going to believe the Word of God...Or Not? That's the issue! I am responsible before God for the choices that I make. Unconditioned, unconstrained decisions; I make them every day, but here's the point of wisdom: They have consequences! You have consequences to the decisions that you make. *The choices you make.... make you.* So he says; 'the man who fears God will avoid all extremes' (vs18b).

Verse 19. The mention of wisdom here would be at home with our discussion; but the context falls away from our discussion (So here again is why my hair falls out). "Wisdom makes one wise person more powerful than 10 rulers in a city." (vs 19). This may in fact be a proverb claiming that wisdom is more important than any other quality or ability. Now normally when we speak of great power we are describing an athlete; or

a businessman who has garnered great sums; or a political leader (and we think of the supreme court with their power to interpret the constitution). But let's mark well the point of our friend with 'the powerful mind': One single person; one single wise person is stronger, more valuable, and more efficient than 10 such individuals. Proverbs 24:5&6: (you might want to put this reference in the margin) says: 'A wise man has great power and a man of knowledge increases strength. For waging war, you need guidance; and for victory; many advisors'. The key word here is powerful. The secret of his strength is an omnipotent God that invisibly surrounds him. Examples: Abram, Joseph, Moses, David, and Daniel to only reference a few. They all, at some point in their lives, displayed superhuman power. Wisdom teaches us that when we're on the right side of a matter: You...just...sit...still...and...WAIT!

Where do I get that? I get that from the life of David. At the end of I Samuel, King Saul is killed on Mount Gilboa and David now has a wide-open highway to the throne room. 2 Samuel 2:1: He inquires of the LORD: 'Shall I go up'? And the LORD says: 'you go to Hebron'. So he did and he sat and he waited... for Eight Years! In that period of time you had the death of Abner and the death of Ish-Bosheth. God was cleaning out the debris, politically, for David to rule and to reign. After eight years of sitting and waiting at Hebron; II Samuel 5:3 'Then, the elders of the tribes of Israel came to Hebron and anointed David as king'. It's so simple in the reading that it's easy to gloss over it. The Point? When you are on the right side of a matter and you're trusting the LORD: You sit still and wait; and the game will come to you. And it did for David. And he is your example.

Now verse 20 asserts the limits of human ability. There is a conjunction in the inspired language that doesn't show up in your NIV and it is very, very important: The conjunction should be translated for or because. It supplies the reason why wisdom is so important, for our need is to have this powerful invisible strength that wisdom provides. We are by nature weak. As natural cowards, it is instinctive for us to first save ourselves and at all costs. This weak nature is readily displayed whenever we enter into spiritual conflict. Say you are blindsided by a trial. This is where the superiority of wisdom shows

its strength over gold because you can't buy your way out of a trial. The righteous man can endure the trail and stay faithful. The wise will be strengthened: That's the point. Let me give you an example of what real wisdom teaches; right from the Word of God.

Listen to these words and take them to heart. Acts 4:13: “When they (the Rulers, the Elders of the people), saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men,” (that's your NIV; ordinary people) “they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” Think about the connection. ‘Ordinary men’ with Jesus: They were astonishing, unintimidated, and courageous. ‘Everyone in Jerusalem, they said, knows that these men had done an outstanding miracle. We can't deny this. What are we going to do with them? So to get them to stop from speaking and spreading this monstrosity any further to the people, they warn them to speak no longer to anyone in His name’ (Acts 4: 16&17). “Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to Him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4: 18-20). AND, ladies and gentleman—Let me tell you this... You and I are here tonight because they didn't stop speaking!

Verses 21 and 22 are taken together to provide an illustration of verse 20: Namely, ‘the unrighteousness of all men’. Everyone is corrupt and your example here is that everyone curses others. So the Teacher's counsel: ‘Masters should not listen to their servants too closely because servants may speak poorly of them. After all, everyone, including the masters themselves, have cursed others’. This word cursing is probably more akin to *grumbling*, rather than the English word cursing.

Verse 22 provides the motive clause: ‘For you know in your heart that many times you yourselves have cursed others’. Now, “For you know in your heart” is the key phrase and literally means ‘your heart knows’ (an idiom for what Westerners, like us, call a conscience). So this is the counsel that your conscience is telling you; ‘don't eavesdrop on conversations’.

Again; what does the Teacher tell us about men and mankind? They are corrupt, frail, careless *and...* they are careless with their mouths. James 3:2: “We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep his whole body in check”. But who is really like that? I just think “If I could just take back some of the things I have said in my life...”

Well, here’s two points of application: First, the wise man hears unflattering things about himself and he says to himself or to others: ‘Let it go; Just let it go’. In that manner he deals tenderly and humbly with everyone; and in taking such a posture he always finds the Will of God. Psalm 25:9: “He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way”.

Second point of application: We are not to be people that hold a grudge about anything. Mr. Spurgeon said; ‘The worst comment directed my way probably only has half the true. Why if my enemies knew me like God knows me, they would certainly have had much more to say’. So, let us just ‘save our powder’ for more important things than ourselves.

Now, we move into our second section: Inaccessible wisdom. Verse 23-24: “All this I tested by wisdom and I said, “I am determined to be wise” —but this was beyond me. Whatever exists is far off and most profound—who can discover it?” The impossible task ‘our man with a powerful mind’ sets for himself is established by the word ‘*determined*’. This is a very unusual word and its force lends to an exclamation point. He was ‘*determined*’ to be wise. And the connection to verse 24 expands the reason why he failed.

Notice the link words ‘far off’: Or literally, ‘far away’. George Barton has speculated that our Teacher didn’t just want to know the what of life, but the why as well. Notice the words “*most profound*”. They intensify the inaccessible wisdom. It reminds us of Job 28 (and I will leave that to your reading), but there, we have a poem that describes wisdom as more difficult than removing precious metals from the bottom of a mine. Finally, the NIV’s word “*discover*”, is literally ‘*to find*’. All this is preparatory to our next section; for our Teacher is on a quest to ‘*discover*’ something ‘hard to find’.

In our final section, verses 25-29, he will seek but not find. These final verses are tied together by once again turning his mind to all the *empirical* evidence that he has experienced ‘under the sun’. The opening verb of verse 25, “*turned*” in the NIV, is literally ‘*to begin*’, and it accounts for all of his new discussion. His object is ‘the pursuit of wisdom’ and ‘*the scheme of things*’. This phrase (*the scheme of things*), is found here for the first time and ties this section together, for we see it also in verses 27&29. Literally, the verbal root means; ‘*to reckon*’, ‘*to plan*’, ‘*to calculate*’; and with its use he is seeking the explanation as to what stands behind the world. And if he can discover ‘*the scheme of things*’...: Well, he’d be at the end of his quest and we could all turn off the lights and go home...: And I could start growing my hair again. But unfortunately, ‘everything is meaningless’: And he’s never going to get there. Lastly, because the syntax of verse 25 is so difficult, the translation is debated by many. But clearly the idea presented here is that he is seeking ‘abstract ideas’ and not ‘classes of people’ (which Luther and other more ancient interpreters have suggested).

Now that he has announced his intention to search things out, he next informs us of what he has found. The NIV translation I ‘*find*’ (vs26) is a participle that tells us his conclusions are the result of repeated experience. “The woman” of vs26: Is she general or is she specific? I think it’s safe to say by her description that she is specific. This is the seductress, the “strange woman” of Proverbs (eg 2:16,5:20, et al), the woman who bites like a snake.

Steven Spielberg’s movie, *Munich*, told the story of Golda Meir’s response to the assassination of the Israeli Olympic athletes in the 1972 Summer Olympics. She sent, by stealth, a small contingent of Israeli killers to retaliate by taking out the Arab murders, one by one. During the story, as they’re staying at a hotel, the leader of the team encounters a beautiful woman in a red dress at the bar. Before long, they’re engaged in a conversation in which she propositioned him; but he turned her down and made his way out into the hotel lobby; where he met one of his associates. As their dialogue concludes he warns his older partner, who is heading toward the bar, of the woman waiting there. With a joke and air of confidence, the older man heads into the

lounge. Hours later, the leader finds his older associate lying on a bed in his dimly lit room unclothed and eyes staring at the ceiling: The back of his head had been blown off. It turns out that the beautiful woman in the red dress was a ‘for-hire’ Dutch assassin. This meant that the Arab’s had discovered their marks and now it would be the Israeli team that would be the hunted.

In vs26 notice the way this woman is described here with the word “*bitter*”. Literally the word means strong; but the translation ‘*bitter*’ fits the context for her. This verse is a warning from our teacher. Some men will be captured by this woman and some will not. And here is what separates the two. Notice the phrase “The man who pleases God....”, vs26b.

I have a son. He’s 24, single, living in Chicago. He has a genuine drive to be successful in his business career. I say that because he is interested in rising up early, doing all the hard tasks in order to learn and to be successful, and working on the weekends if necessary, et cetera. He’s willing to go the long and hard way, because he has the drive. And I have talked to him about this drive and what he wants to do in the future. But I pointed out in that conversation a text of scripture. It is Joseph’s words to Potiphar’s wife. ‘How can I do such a thing and sin against God?’ (Gen 39: 9). What I have said to him is this: “Do you want to run Egypt or do you want her? You can’t have them both.” If Joseph had taken her, that would have been a long, dark alley that would never have gotten him to the throne room of Pharaoh. ***The choices you make... make you.***

With his first ‘finding’ finished in verse 26 our Teacher now moves on to his second ‘finding’ in verse 27; and it will expand upon his evaluation of both men and women. The verb ‘*to find*’ is used twice in this verse (the NIV translation; ‘to discover’) and then again verse 28; ‘*not finding*’. The original language here is difficult to translate, but most agree that the NIV translation is very good; for it adds one thing to another to discover ‘*the scheme of things*’.

Now if you consider these words carefully, ‘our man with a powerful mind’ is telling us that his conclusions do not only come as a result of his experiences, but by a

careful analysis of the evidence over time; adding one thing to another thing to reach those conclusions. Then finally, his very important interruption of direct speech (vs27): “Look, says the Teacher...”. In other words, he is going to stand behind what he says.

Verse 28. One can imagine how this verse has generated many creative interpretations: And so here I am at this moment. It appears on the surface to downgrade humanity in general and women in particular. Namely, the search of vs28 has found only one man in 1000 and no women at all. Well, what are we to say about this verse? First we want to ask: ‘Who is it that he was looking for among the people that brought him to his conclusion?’ Notice in your NIV the word “*upright*”: It is not in the original text. It has been added to help us interpret the text; and I think it’s helpful because the context implies that he was seeking out goodness; virtue. Or possibly that he was looking for ‘good’ people and then tells us that he found very few. Notice also the word ‘*upright*’ in verse 29 for it also frames the context.

Now, what are we to do with this troubling statement? I think our answer can be determined by the literary style itself: He is writing in Hebrew poetic style. Our prose in the western world is mostly pneumatic. We center everything on rhyme. Roses are red, violets are blue, and then we pick out the words that rhyme with red and blue. But in ancient Israel, poetry was not centered on rhyme but on parallelism: Two independent thoughts that reference the same thing or the same idea.

I want to show you two examples so that we are all on the same page and this is why I had you mark Psalm 90. Here is an example of Hebrew parallelism: Psalm 90:1&2: “He who dwells in the shelter of the most high will rest in the shadow of the almighty.” Notice the parallelism. ‘Dwells’ directly corresponds to ‘rest’. ‘Shelter’ to ‘shadow’. ‘Most high’ to ‘almighty’. That’s parallelism. That’s the way the Hebrews wrote their poems. Let me give you another example. Psalm 92:11: “My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries. My ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.” Do you see the parallelism? ‘Eyes’ with ‘ears’, ‘defeat’ with ‘rout’. ‘Adversaries’ with ‘wicked’.

Now in our text in Ecclesiastes, the parallelism is harder to see but has essentially the same meaning. ‘There is no one righteous between men and women’.

This parallelism is the correspondence of ‘upright’ to ‘men and women’. Therefore our ‘Teacher with a powerful mind’ says in verse 28 that “an ‘*upright*’ man (a virtuous man), is one among a 1000”. What does he mean by that? Well, walk out onto your front yard in the dark of night take your index finger and randomly point it to the heavens. You discover that your finger lands on “Sirius: The Dog Star”. What would we say? One chance in 1000; or one chance in 100,000? Or aren’t we really saying that there is no chance of that random action actually landing on “Sirius: The Dog Star”! So here is our point: With parallelism ‘There is no one upright’. ‘There are no upright’ women among their population: And there are no ‘upright’ men among their population. There just aren’t any good people! That is what our man says after observing life ‘under the sun’.

Now if you believe in ‘the inherent goodness of men’ then you got that doctrine from some other place than the Bible. To punctuate this point, Paul writes (Romans 3:10&11) “As is written: There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; no, not one who seeks God”. The Teacher was seeking good things ‘under the sun’. And just couldn’t find them.

Verse 29a: “This only have I found:”. In vs26 he found the wicked woman and now he finds something else, vs29b: ‘God made men upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes’. And how would he know that? Because he is the one that did it. He was trying to find fulfillment in life every which way; and found none. Man, who was at the beginning in the garden and was made sinless and upright: But became a schemer due to the fall. One generation from his parents: Cain deceived his brother Able; got him all alone and murdered him. Cain schemed: And we have all been schemers ever since.

Our ‘man with the powerful mind’ went on a quest to find the righteous. But he couldn’t find them: Because there aren’t any. No, my friends, if you think you are righteous; you are mistaken. There is not enough good works to do, not enough confessionals, and not enough waters of baptism. There is just not enough of anything to make you a holy, righteous person.

You are a sinner saved by grace and by grace alone. And I pray that the Spirit of God, who authors this Word, would cut you to the heart to see that. You need His Grace, you need to become the object of His mercy. You have no great rights in His world. You are a sinner in thought, in word, and in conduct.

I invite you to place your trust in the Righteous One who can suddenly transfer your wickedness onto His righteousness: And in that transfer, ‘you will be saved by His Grace. Not of any works because you have nothing in which to boast’ (Eph 2:8). This is the gospel that is proclaimed here tonight; the same Gospel of Jesus Christ that is portrayed to all the world. Sinners saved by grace. May God give you the grace to hear that Word; may He open your heart to that Word by the power of the Spirit; and may you receive it by believing that He will regenerate your soul, so that you will be made new in Christ Jesus. May God give you that grace tonight.

(End of Audio)