



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

John 5: 19-30

Spring 2022

"Like Father, Like Son"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We are in the Gospel of John and we're in chapter 5. We began that chapter last week and Jesus is back in Jerusalem. And He does a miracle at the pool of Bethesda; He healed a man who was lame—and had been lame for 38 years, a great miracle. But He did it on the Sabbath, so that brought Him into conflict with the Pharisees—and they've had a discussion. In this discussion the Lord referred to God as “His Father” and that brought the controversy to another level. We read in verse 18 that, “For this reason...because He was calling God His own Father...they were seeking to kill Him all the more.”

So we come into the middle of that discussion, that controversy, with verse 19, and we'll look at verses 19 through 30,

¹⁹ Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. ²² For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the

Son, ²³ so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

²⁴ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

²⁵ Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; ²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

³⁰ "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

John 5: 19-30

This is a great text; an involved text on the deity of Christ as the Son of God. With His statement earlier, and since then, you can imagine what it's done at this point in the conversation. But we'll look at it in some detail in a moment. Let's give thanks for the Scripture, and our time together in it.

(Message) C. S. Lewis was the most popular Christian writer of the 20th century: For good reason, he was a brilliant Oxford don whose writings had clarity and spiritual insights. One of his more famous statements is in his book, *Mere Christianity*, where he showed the irrationality of rejecting Christ's deity in favor of accepting His humanity and Him as a great moral teacher. "A man who was merely a man," he wrote, "and said the sort of things Jesus said, would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a

lunatic or else he would be 'the devil of hell'. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse...but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Now that's an oft quoted statement in defense of the Christian faith that I'm sure you've heard before. But I quote that because that, really, is the choice that Jesus gave to the Pharisees in John chapter 5. They didn't consider Him to be a great moral teacher, but a bad man, a lawbreaker—if not a lunatic, then a liar.

He had done a miracle; He'd done a wonderful thing; He'd healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years. Jesus had raised him out of hopelessness, given strength to his legs, and made him walk. But He'd done it on Saturday, and that made Him a Sabbath breaker to the rabbis.

Jesus defense was simple, in verse 17, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." Well that didn't satisfy the Pharisees. That could only increase their hostility because they recognized in His statement a claim to deity—to being equal with God. And Jesus, for His part, didn't deny that.

In fact, if there was any doubt about it, Jesus made the meaning clear in the next verses where He expanded on His relationship with God. Where He explained His relationship with God: It's a relationship of complete unity. Everything that He has done, He has done because His Father in heaven has showed it to Him. Their wills are united; Their wills are one because They are One in essence.

That's what Jesus was saying in our passage, John chapter 5, verses 19 through 30. It's an important passage on the Lord's person and work, and on the doctrine of the Trinity, all said in defense and explanation of His miracle at the pool. Quite a explanation, quite a defense. And not only that, we have in this text, (a rather involved text), the substance of saving faith.

What is the object of our faith? What must we believe to have life? —It's laid out for us here. So this is an important passage, a theological passage, but it demonstrates, I think, the practicality, the necessity of good, correct theology.

So the Lord says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner." (vs19). Now He's using 'a figure' here: It's not that Jesus is actually looking at the Father and following everything that He's doing, but that's the image He gives. And the background for that statement is something that was rather common to probably most of these Pharisees and to many in that day.

Jesus, you know, was a carpenter. He was "the carpenter" of Nazareth; that's what the men of the town called Him in Mark chapter 6, verse 3. How had He learned that trade? The way all Jewish boys in that age learned their father's trade, by watching and imitating him. As a young boy in Joseph's shop, Jesus studied how Joseph applied his trade. He watched him build a table or fix a chair, and learned from a master craftsman at work, who lovingly taught his adopted Son and watched Him excel.

That's what is behind this statement in verse 19. And these Pharisees would have recognized that custom in what He was saying; because, they too, had most likely learned their father's trade. The Pharisees often had that: they were men not only trained in the Torah but they learned a trade to support themselves and would have understood what Jesus meant here—that His work of 'Spiritual carpentry', as it were, of repairing a soul on the Sabbath, originated with the Master Craftsman, God, who is His Father.

What greater justification could He give for the rightness of healing on the Sabbath than that? He had only imitated the Father. So His healing was an act of God. And importantly, all that He did is a revelation as well. What the Lord did and what He said here reveals a lot about Him and His relationship with the Father. It's similar to what He told Phillip later in chapter 14, (vs9), "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

In the next verses, verses 20 through 23, Jesus reveals three facts about their relationship: That They are united in love; They are united in power; and They are united in authority. Verse 20, "The Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing." What a blessing to have a Father like that, who loves His Son so much that He wants Him working with Him.

Now that's the standard for fatherhood. Some of us were blessed with good fathers. Others not. Regardless, here is the model: To love one's son or daughter and show them how to live by word and by deed. "God is Love," John tells us in 1 John 4:8. That's not all that God is, but He is that. And the apostle John stresses that fact in his writings. And we fathers and mothers never act more like God than when we love our children. And that doesn't mean indulge our children, but love them with wise, biblical counsel, correction, and personal example.

The Lord used that picture of the home and workplace to show the eternal relationship that He had within the Godhead of infinite love and eternal partnership between God the Father and God the Son. This is life within the Trinity. The One God in three Persons, distinct Persons. But all three of the same divine essence and all three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of the same will and purpose.

Now it's a hard idea to grasp, and we're just scratching the surface—this idea of Three-in-One. J. I. Packer called it, "perhaps the most difficult thought that the human mind has ever been asked to handle." I think that's probably true; we will never grasp this truth, at least never grasp it fully. We grasp it to some extent but we will spend all eternity learning about this. God is infinite and eternal and while we will come to understand more and more about it, there's always more and more to learn. And so it will be throughout all eternity, learning more and more about the eternal, infinite Triune God.

So the Lord, because this is a difficult concept to gather in our minds altogether, because of that, He didn't so much explain it as illustrate it from a loving Father and His loving Son, working together to do great things—like healing a crippled man. Jesus had done that because it was the Father's will to repair that broken soul. And He had chosen

the Sabbath for the day in which He would do this great miracle of healing because the Father showed Him that.

Why didn't the Pharisees rejoice in that and say, "Ah, this is what the Sabbath is about, a time of rest and a time to marvel at God's goodness and grace and blessing, rather than worrying about what not to do: Realizing that if we do what is good and right on the Sabbath, we are keeping the Sabbath."

Well they couldn't deny that a great miracle had happened. It was proof of the Lord's claims here and of all that He said. But they didn't rejoice, they resisted. This upset their theology.

And so the Lord adds, "*The Father will show Him*", (*the Son*), "greater works than these, so that you will marvel." (vs20). Not so that they would be dazzled by what He did, but to be convinced so that they would believe. Now at that moment, the Pharisees weren't believing and they weren't convinced, in fact, just the opposite. Everything the Lord said to them incensed them even more—speaking of His relationship with God as Father and Son. But the Lord didn't stop. He, and God His Father, are united in love, and in their plan to bless the world.

Then, in verse 21, He told them that they were united in the very power to do that. "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes." So that's great power, raising the dead. It's what God does, He is the source of life. In Deuteronomy 32, (*verse 39*), God said, "There is no god besides Me. It is I who put to death and give life." In Romans chapter 4, verse 17, Paul wrote that it is, "God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist."

God is a God of life. He creates *ex nihilo*, "out of nothing". And Jesus was claiming to have that power. He would demonstrate that in chapter 11 when He raised Lazarus from the dead, (and that would be the seventh and the final sign of the Gospel of John).

And yet, we read through the Bible, (maybe you're reading through the Bible this year), and you're going to come to Elijah and Elisha and you'll see that they raised the dead, also. But they didn't claim equality with God.

But Jesus said that He "gives life to whom He wishes." That's God's prerogative. That's God's special, exclusive right. And this was a claim to divine sovereignty on the part of our Lord Jesus Christ. "To whom He wishes."

Thirdly, they are united in authority. God had entrusted Him with the authority to judge the world. That's what He says next in verse 22, "He has given all judgment to the Son," Jesus said. And just as giving life is God's prerogative, so too, judgment is the prerogative of God. It has always been recognized as the task of God, at least by the people of God. Abraham called God "the Judge of all the earth" in Genesis 18, verse 25, just before Sodom and Gomorrah were to be judged and destroyed. But He gave that to the Son. In fact, I think the one that Abraham was talking to there was the preincarnate Christ, to whom the judgment had been given.

But it doesn't mean that He does this outside of the Father. Not at all. They are united and this is what Jesus has been teaching. They are completely united in their will and their perspective and their authority, and His judgment will be the Father's judgment—just as His act was God's will at the pool of Bethesda. He is united with the Father in love; They are united in power and united in authority.

He share's God's glory, He says in verse 23, "...so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father." Now that was nothing short of a claim to deity. We sometimes read New Testament liberal scholars saying that, 'Paul called Jesus the Son of God but Christ never claimed to be the Son of God.' Well, you can't get any more clear on that than this; He's equating Himself with God—and the glory and the honor that goes to the Father goes to the Son equally.

Now there's no middle ground on this. There's no in between on this. Jesus either spoke truth or untruth, fact or fiction. He can either be rejected with scorn or

worshiped as LORD—He doesn't give us any other choice but to reject Him or to worship Him.

Those who worship Him receive the gift of life. That's what Jesus says next in verses 24 through 29, which only heightens the claim that He is making about Himself; about His identity and importance. It's through Him alone, through faith in Him that a person escapes the judgment to come and has everlasting life. Verse 24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who **hears** My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

Hearing; this word *hearing* is the same as *believing*. In fact, it's a common way of referring to *faith* in the Old Testament, to 'hear with the heart', as it were. For example, the monotheistic statement of Deuteronomy 6:4, the Shema, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD our God, the LORD is one!" When Moses said "Hear", he meant, 'Hear with faith'. He meant, 'Believe this. What you hear is true. Believe it!'

And that's the idea in this statement by the Lord. It lays stress on comprehending what is said and believing in what is said—believing the words of Christ. Believing His Word is believing the Word of the One who sent Him. In other words, believing Christ is believing God the Father.

Now who can say such a thing truthfully, rationally, except one who is God—God the Son. That again, in yet another statement, is what the Lord was claiming; and the person who believes Christ and believes in Him has the promise that he or she has eternal life; and they escape judgment. That he or she does not come into judgment. What a great promise. They're like a person who walks out of the courtroom free, acquitted of all crimes and charges, justified, declare by the judge innocent and completely right with the law. —Case dismissed. That's what God, "the Judge of all the earth", does with every believer.

How? Well, it's not because we're without sin. We know that we're not. 'He who says he has no sin deceives himself, and the truth is not in him', John says in his first epistle. (1 Jn 1:8). No, we know that we are sinful. We sin every day.

It's not because of us, it's because of Christ, because of what He did. He paid all of our moral and spiritual debts when He suffered in our place and suffered the penalty for our crimes in our place on the cross.

That's what Paul wrote in Romans 5, (vs6), "Christ died for the ungodly." While we were sinners, Christ died for us. Why? To pay that debt. From the beginning to the end, all of it paid at that moment on the cross. And we appropriate that, we take it upon ourselves, it becomes our actual possession through faith alone. Faith joins us to Him. When we do that, when we believe in Him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world, at that moment Christ's death becomes our death—that is, we appropriate it. What He obtained for us becomes our possession; His payment is our payment.

We're forgiven all debts, and 'we have eternal life.' Notice, He didn't say that we *will have* life in the future, but we have it *now*. That statement is in the present tense. So praise God for grammar. I'm not a lover of grammar, I have to say. I've struggled with that, but it is important for clear communication and precision of thought and speech. And here the precise meaning is, we have it now, eternal life. The believer in Jesus Christ is already entered into that glorious future life.

And that is permanent. It is "eternal", He said, it can never end; can never be taken from us. We are eternally secure. That's the implication. And we're to live in that confidence. I don't think we can live a confident, joyful Christian life if we don't understand that great truth: that "eternal life" is *eternal*; it will never be taken, never be lost. We have it now; we live in it and we should appropriate it daily. And we can. We can know that and we can have that certainty—that is not based on our feelings.

That's what we tend to do so often, "I don't feel like I'm saved." Well, that's maybe the case, but that doesn't mean you're not saved. It's not based on feelings, it's not based on our behavior, (although a believer will behave). He or she will obey, will love the LORD and love His people. But still, our assurance of salvation is based ultimately on God's Word. It's based on this very statement that we've read. He has said it. Salvation is through faith alone. And we believe that and we rest in His Word. He cannot lie.

Now the Pharisees must have bristled at all of this and thought that He, Jesus, the carpenter, if He could promise eternal life and say that it is through those who believed in Him, they must have thought that was preposterous—blasphemous! And knowing this, (Jesus knew their thoughts), He tells them in verse 25 that this would happen, and it would happen soon, this “coming”, that is, people understanding, and believing, and having eternal life. Verse 25, "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is **coming** and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."

“The dead” are the ‘spiritually’ dead, unbelievers, who will hear Christ, hear His voice in their hearts—and experience spiritual resurrection, the new birth—and believe. Now that's the power of Christ. How does a dead person understand? How does a dead person hear? It's a miracle. Christianity is a miraculous faith. Salvation is a work of God. It's a miracle. It is the life-giving power of God that brings this about. And as the Son of God, He has that power and the prerogative to give this life and speak these words, as He says, ‘to whomever He wishes.’ (Luk 4:6).

That's grace. It's sovereign grace. And this is what the healing of the cripple by the pool of Bethesda illustrated. His Sovereign choice of that man, (when there was a pool surrounded by people), He chose that man and healed him with a word—with a command. The man *heard*—and the man walked. Now again, as I say, that's sovereign grace. It is the irresistible call of the Savior to His chosen ones: ‘Live! Come out of darkness.’ That's when we hear His voice, we're brought to faith—and respond.

And they respond because that command is ‘supernatural’, as I said. That command is life giving. It happens in a place like this. It happens wherever the Word of God is taught. It's not the preacher that has the power, it's the power of the Word of God. A person may be sitting there, maybe it's someone here, sitting, not interested in what he's hearing, when things begin to make sense, ring true, and soon he believes.

There may be some like that here, as I said. Now if that's so, don't harden your heart; the LORD may be speaking to you: Respond, though you are dead, you will find that you can; and you can by God's powerful grace.

Now again, as the Pharisees heard this, they must have thought this too fantastic, this claim to give life to the dead. How is that possible? How can He, this carpenter, possibly do that?!

So in verse 26 Jesus explains how. It's because, like God, He "has life in Himself." Only God has that. Only God is self-existent. People are dependent on God for breath; every breath you take is a gift from God. Every moment of life you have, this moment right now that you're experiencing, is a gift of God. We are totally dependent on Him. We live and move and exist in Him. He is self-existent.

But Jesus says in this verse, as the proof of what I'm saying, that He has "life in Himself." This isn't something He got at the incarnation when He was born into the world or during His ministry. This is part of His eternal relationship with the Father. As the eternal Son of God, He has always had this life from the Father. As John wrote in the opening of the Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn 1:1). And Jesus was making the same claim here to those Pharisees, a claim of deity, a claim to be God—God the Son who has the authority, has power to give life 'to whomever He wishes.' And since the Father and Son are united, not only in will but also in being, (that is in essence), the Son has, on that basis, the right "to execute judgment", (vs21), to be "the Judge of all the earth."

Now all of this has been said in defense of the Lord healing on the Sabbath—doing a marvelous miracle on the Sabbath. How could He do that? He's the Son of God. God, His Father, is always working and He was following His Father's will. Every statement He has made in His own defense has been given in simple, declarative statements. Maybe you've noticed that. What He's saying, He's stating as fact. He's not debating them. He's not trying to prove this. He's stating these things as fact.

'Well, isn't that really begging the question: That is assuming the truth of it without proving it? After all, anyone could say these things. That doesn't mean that they're true. A mad man or a demon could say such things—and there have been plenty of mad men that have said these kind of things.'

But the Christ wasn't speaking in a vacuum. He has done a miracle: He had healed a man who was crippled for 38 years. How could the Pharisees explain that? They don't even attempt to explain that—or question it.

And He will explain, from verses 31 through 47, that He had witnesses to the truth of what He's saying and who testified of Him; for example, John the Baptist is one He mentions, as well as the prophets and Moses witnessed of Him. But also there's someone else involved in all of this who is unidentified—the third person of the Trinity. This is all about God the Father, and God the Son; but the Holy Spirit is also present here. He always is. He brings conviction, and the Lord will speak later about the Spirit in chapters 14 through 16. He's "the Helper", He is "the Spirit of truth." (Jn 15:26). That's how the Lord describes Him. He gives understanding and faith to unbelieving hearts.

And the Spirit was there with the Son to convict and convince whenever the Word of God is being taught. That's why the Word of God is supernatural. That's why the Word of God brings about the events that change our life; because the Spirit of God is in this Book. And so, the Spirit of God, through this Book and through the preaching of it, calls people out of darkness and into light. He does that. He brings conviction.

Responding to His call is a matter of life and death, as the next statements show in verses 28 and 29, where the Lord brings together His claim to both give life and judge life. In the future, there will be a resurrection. Christ will call out people from the grave and they "will come forth" to their eternal destinies. "Those who did the good *deeds*", He says, will come forth "to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment." (vs29).

The grave is not the end; there is life beyond it for everyone. The soul is eternal. The moment that a child is conceived in the womb of a mother, that is an eternal being; from that moment, for all eternity. The soul is eternal. It never dies or sleeps or ceases to exist.

But there's also a future for the body. And all people have a physical future, a physical, eternal future. The salvation that Christ achieved at Calvary is a complete salvation—salvation of the body as well as of the soul and spirit. So salvation is not completed until the soul and spirit are united in a glorified body.

God always completes what He begins. He never leaves a work unfinished. He gives believers eternal life, not temporary life. It is life that never ends. It can never be destroyed or taken from us. We cannot lose it. It is eternal, the term itself say everything.

In chapter 10, (vs28), the Lord makes that clear. "I give eternal life to them," (to His sheep), "and they shall never perish." Now what a promise that is. I've already talked about it and explained the importance of it, but we come back to it. We should come back to it and understand it and believe it. It is an important truth; and in fact, all of the writers of Scripture make the point. In Ephesians chapter 1, verse 13 and in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30, Paul writes of the Holy Spirit. And he states that at the moment of faith, the believer is "sealed" with the Holy Spirit. The moment we believe that sealing occurs—and it cannot be broken.

He goes on in chapter 4, (vs30), to say, we are "sealed for the day of redemption." "For the day of resurrection" and then we will be raised to glory. You're absolutely secure in Him, unto the day of resurrection. And it will happen at our Lord's return.

But at the end of His millennial kingdom on earth, there will be another resurrection; this one 'the judgment.' John describes it in Revelation 20, verses 11 through 15. He calls it "the second death", (vs14), when Christ sits on "a great white throne", (vs11), passes judgment on all unbelievers, who are then "cast into the lake of

fire". (vs13). It will be a terrible day—and an inevitable day when those who refuse Christ's call 'to come' in this life, will respond to His call to come then. It is a summons that none can escape.

But you'll notice that what distinguishes one group from another is *deeds*. Verse 29, "...those who did "the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment." Now that might seem to contradict what we have been saying about salvation all through this study of the Gospel of John: Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. 'Does that not contradict John 3:16, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life? Whoever believes? But now were talking about *works*.'

No, it doesn't contradict it at all. What it confirms is saving faith is living faith—and good works are the evidence of it. In chapter 3, verse 21, Jesus spoke of 'practicing the truth and showing that our deeds have been wrought in God', they are the work of God. Believers have them; the life of Christ in them; and that life will manifest itself in our thoughts and in our deeds: His obedience, His mercy, His concern for the weak, and His strength and conviction for the truth—all of that will be in us. We'll manifest these things. That's the result, the inevitable result, from one degree to another in the believer of a new life; of the life that God has given us. Those who don't believe produce what Paul called "the deeds of the flesh": immorality, idolatry, outburst of anger, just to name a few that he gives. (Gal 5:19).

Now this judgment will come, and it will be fair. No one will doubt it. No one will protest at the judgment and say 'This is not right. You haven't judged me correctly.' Everyone will know they've been judged absolutely fairly and correctly.

And the reason is given in verse 30, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

Because the Father and the Son are united in being, in one essence together, the One God, they are united in decisions. Christ's judgments are the judgments of God—

and they're perfect. He's God's Son. That's the lesson Jesus gave this group of Pharisees, that He is God the Son, doing what God the Father did, in perfect unity with the Father's will and purpose. Believing Him—believing the Lord Jesus Christ is a matter of life and death.

So, how did these Pharisees respond to all of this? They would have agreed with C. S. Lewis. They did not accept Jesus as a great moral teacher—but neither did they accept Him as the Son of God. They judged Him to be the opposite. In chapter 8, (vs52), they said, "You have a demon." In spite of His beautiful teaching, what their own arresting force of soldiers said, 'Never have we heard a man teach like this.' (Jn 7:46), in spite of the beauty of His teaching, in spite of the mighty miracles that He did, they said He is 'a devil of hell'. Why?

Ultimately these things are "spiritually appraised"; the truth is spiritually discerned; the truth is supernaturally known and believed. That's 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 14. As I said, again, it's a supernatural work of God. He speaks to us. We may not hear Him speak, but you can know that He speaks. He draws people to Himself, irresistibly. It's not them, it's Him.

C. S. Lewis is an example of that. At the end of his spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, he recounts his conversion, (really, he doesn't talk about his conversation until one of the last page or two of the book), but he called himself 'a reluctant convert'. He read and he discussed with friends; and over time he moved from atheism to theism. But that made him no different from the Pharisees that Jesus talked to—they were theists.

"The final step was taken", as he put it, "on a sunny day when a friend drove him to the Whipsnade Zoo, of all places." He said he didn't know how it happened. He had not spent the journey in thought, but he wrote, "When we set out, I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And when I reached the zoo, I did." How it happened he didn't explain—he didn't know. But how it happened was the Holy Spirit, who convicts

and convinces, who quietly calls us to faith—and by His powerful grace we come. Otherwise we'd be no different from those Pharisees: moral, religious, and lost.

What about you? Have you believed? You believe something about Jesus; but in light of this passage, you can't believe He is a mere man and moral teacher—that option's not there. Do you think He's a demon or a mad man? No, I doubt that any of you think that. Well maybe you think that He's a myth, that He never really lived. Well, that's what some say today. How do you deal with this proposition that C. S. Lewis set forth? Well, there's another option—He never existed.

Well, that's one way to dismiss it, but that's really an interpretation of utter despair. History doesn't support that. Ancient documents don't support that.

No, the only reasonable answer is He is God's eternal Son, who is the Savior. Listen to His call. Respond. Believe. It's a matter of life and death. Those who believe receive everlasting life. May God help you to do that if you've not done it.

And you who have, rejoice in that life you have and the glory that's to come. You have it *now*. It can never be taken from you. The LORD won't let that happen and you will enter in to great glory someday. We praise the LORD for that.

Father, we thank You for that certain hope that we have; that we will, 'On high someday dwell with Thee'. In the present You dwell with us through the Holy Spirit; You never leave us or forsake us. We thank You for that.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

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