



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: 1 Samuel 20:11-23

“The Mastering Passion of Jonathan's Love”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Returning to 1 Samuel chapter 20, for our Scripture reading, I would like to read verses 11 through 23. Before I read these verses, I would like also to make just a few comments regarding the flow of the author's thought. You may remember that David has left Natioth, where Samuel was, out of fear for his life, and the constant continued hatred of King Saul. He expresses this to Jonathan in the earlier part of the chapter and Jonathan seeks to assure him that his fears are not altogether warranted.

Then as the chapter develops, in verse 12 through verse 17, there is a further expansion of the covenant that Jonathan has made with David, and that is spelled out in some detail and we want to look a little bit at that. And then in order to determine Saul's attitude toward him, David and Jonathan make a plan by which they may come to know it. David, since he was expected to be at the dinner table with King Saul, he absents himself, and from the reaction of King Saul he feels that he will be able to know exactly what Saul feels about him. Well, as a result of this little test of his absence, we learn that Saul's anger burned against Jonathan and against David. And in fact, Saul accuses Jonathan of making a choice of David over against his own family and his own future. And in that, incidentally, his deadly anger is ferreted out by his response to David's absence. The chapter concludes with a little incident of the shooting of the arrows by

which Jonathan tells David the results of his time around the table of Saul and makes it necessary for David to flee.

The chapter concludes with a bit of an interesting statement in verse 41.

“When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times And they kissed each other and wept together, but David more.”

So we’re looking at the continued relationship of David and Jonathan and seeking to center attention on some of the important things in it. Our Scripture reading begins at verse 11 and we will read through verse 23.

“Jonathan said to David, ‘Come, and let us go out into the field.’ So both of them went out to the field, then Jonathan said to David, ‘The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you? If it please my father to do you harm, may the Lord do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety and may the Lord be with you as He has been with my father. And If I am still alive, [You can see that Jonathan fears for his own life as a result of his relationship with David.] Will you not show me the loving kindness of the Lord that I may not die? And you shall not cut off your loving kindness from my house forever, not even when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.’ So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, ‘May the Lord require it at the hands of David’s enemies.’ [That, probably, is an idiomatic expression ‘David’s enemies’ for David, himself. And so, we probably should read it “May the Lord require it at the hands of David, himself.”] And Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he

loved him as he loved his own life. Then Jonathan said to him, ‘Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed because your seat will be empty. When you have stayed for three days, you shall go down quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself on that eventful day, and you shall remain by the stone Ezel. I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target. And behold, I will send the lad, saying, Go, find the arrows. If I specifically say to the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of you, get them, then [He’s talking now to David.] come; for there is safety for you and no harm, as the Lord lives. But if I say to the youth, Behold, the arrows are beyond you, go, for the Lord has sent you away. As for the agreement of which you and I have spoken, behold, the Lord is between you and me forever.’”

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

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we come to Thee in the name of David’s great God, the God that we know now as the Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And we thank Thee for the access that we have, through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ in the Spirit. We praise Thee for the assurance of the forgiveness of sins through the blood that was shed on Calvary’s Cross. And we thank Thee for the way in which Thou hast ministered to us through the Holy Spirit, causing us to recognize our sin, our need and then to recognize the greatness of the provision for us made in our Lord’s death for sinners.

We thank Thee, Lord, and we praise Thee. We thank Thee for the enlightenment that has come, touching our hearts, enabling us to know how much we are indebted to the mercy and grace that are offered in Christ. And, Lord, we pray that if there are any in this auditorium who do not know the grace of God in Christ, as that which ministers to every need that we have, may by the Holy Spirit through the preaching and reading of the word of God, each of us come to that understanding and the joy of it.

“The Mastering Passion of Jonathan’s Love” by S. Lewis Johnson
Copyright © 2008 Believers Chapel, Dallas, Texas. All Rights Reserved.

We pray for our country. We ask Thy blessing upon the President, in these very critical days. Give wisdom and guidance to him and those who are associated with him. We pray, also, for the whole Church of Jesus Christ, wherever our Lord is lifted up as Lord and Savior of sinners. May Thy blessing be upon the preaching of the word of God and its ministry, today, to the ends of this earth, wherever companies of believers gather, may Thy presence be there in ministry and in power.

We, especially, Lord, ask Thy blessing upon those who have requested our prayers, some who are in the hospital, some who are bereaving, others who are sick, and then, many special needs that exist, we bring them all to Thee. We pray, O God, that Thou wilt minister to us and to them and to those who minister to them. And, if it please Thee, give healing in accordance with Thy perfect will. We thank Thee for this day and for the blessings of it. May Thy hand be upon us as we sing and as we hear the word of God. May our hearts be open to the Scriptures.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today as we continue our series of studies on the Life of David is “The Mastering Passion of Jonathan’s Love.” About a month ago, I walked into the hall to the rear here near the office, and there were some books that were available for the congregation to take home; some ones that the library did not feel could be added to our library, some duplicates and some others. On the pile, and perhaps it was in the library itself, there was just a little book that really was almost like a little notebook. And it was entitled, “Sermon Outlines” by Alexander McLaren. And since I’ve always enjoyed reading Alexander McLaren’s sermons and expositions, he has a series through the whole of the Bible, I took it home and was opening it up this past week. And he has a sermon entitled, “The Tears of Love.” And the sermon is based upon Luke chapter 7 and our Lord’s encounter with the woman that was a sinner, who in Simon the Pharisee’s house entered and began to wash our Lord’s feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair,

which was, of course, a humiliating thing in Israel to do. But, nevertheless, she did it because, obviously, she had come to know the grace and the mercy found in the Lord, Jesus Christ. And out of her gratitude and thankfulness, she did what she did.

It’s kind of an incident that has been called a ‘pantomime,’ because our Lord speaks in it but there’s practically no other person in it speaking. It’s an acted incident in our Lord’s life. Everybody’s quiet but she speaks by her actions. And then our Lord replies to Simon the Pharisee and proclaims in application the truth of the incident and then at the end says, in effect, her faith has saved her and the evidence of her faith is the love that she has manifested in her actions.

“The Tears of Love” is that which Mr. McLaren entitled his sermon on that passage. I thought about it and thought that one might also use that title for chapter 20 of 1 Samuel and the relationship between David and Jonathan because in verse 41 we read, When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side, he was supposed to flee, but he could not flee, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times And they, that is, Jonathan and David, kissed each other and wept together but David more. The Tears of Love; the love of Jonathan and the love of David: it could, in a sense, express precisely what we have here.

The love of the woman that was a sinner was not simply emotional; it was rational. It could give an account of itself and she could have given an account of it. But what she did was probably a more significant and impressive account of the rationality that lay behind it. It rested upon a fact, the assurance of the forgiveness of her great sins. It was preceded by conviction of sin and that was followed by the certainty of the love of Christ for her.

As we read in John’s 1st epistle, “We love because he has first loved us.” Every Christian, from whose heart there arises the first expression of love to God, for what Christ has done for him, it is the product of our great Father in Heaven, who is seeking out his elect ones and bringing them to himself.

Jonathan’s love was grounded in the situation in which he found himself in an appreciation of David and his great victory over Goliath. He, with the rest of the Israelites, when Goliath came out and challenged them, as the Scriptures have told us in chapter 17, was fearful. Then David, in the power of the name in which he came to fight Goliath, overcame the giant and as a result of it, won the great victory and impressed, evidently, upon Jonathan that this would be the anointed king of Israel. He was Prince Jonathan, and he would have succeeded Saul, normally and in the natural order of things, but we read that he stripped himself of the robe that was on him, gave it to David, with his armor, including the sword and his bow and his belt, in token of the fact that he acknowledged the greatness of David, his love for him, and his desire that David succeed Saul as king. It was a magnificent expression of the striking way in which Jonathan had come to love for David. He was so sure of what was going to happen that in the incident before us, he even demands of David and secures the promise that in the years to come, David as king will not forget Jonathan’s house which, as you know, later on, David did not.

Now, we are going to look at the chapter and I would like to briefly summarize the teachings, spend just a little time on one or two points, and then conclude with a more lengthy conclusion in application of what we find in this chapter. So we look first at verses 1 through 23, where we have the renewal of the covenant of David with Jonathan.

David is fearful for his life. He escaped from Naioth in Ramah, while Saul was under the influence of the Spirit, raving and ranting and lying upon the ground with most of his clothes gone as we read in the last few verses of the 19th chapter. So it’s evident to David that Saul’s anger against him has continued.

It’s very interesting to me that David’s actions seem to illustrate the dim light of the Old Testament concerning spiritual truth. We sometimes fail to realize that the bright light of the New Testament revelation is something that really is a bit different from the Old

Testament as a whole. Now, I do not mean to suggest there were not individuals who pierced through some of the darkness of the Old Testament and some of the uncertainty of the Old Testament in magnificent expressions of faith. But, generally speaking, in the Old Testament, we have a kind of dimness and a kind of obscurity concerning the future.

We read in 2 Timothy chapter 1, words by the Apostle Paul in which in verse 10 of the first chapter he says that God has now revealed truth by the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. There are many ways in which we might illustrate this point. I trust that you will accept my statement of it that in the Old Testament, generally, men did not have the light concerning spiritual truth that the apostles and others in the New Testament possessed. We’re not suggesting, in any way, that they did not have the reality of the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation. But the Old Testament, due to the progress of divine revelation, we must remember, contains a growing understanding of the truth of the word of God.

David, just like everyone, realized that his life is in danger from the enemy that is before him, King Saul. And he recognized that his life was simply a vapor. That’s what James calls our life. It’s just a vapor. It’s come to us, it soon goes, and we pass from this particular scene into the times and ages of eternity that lie before us. And it’s something for all of us to think about. But David in the 3rd verse says, “There’s hardly a step between me and death.” And, one gains the impression that he does not understand what lies beyond it, because death means more of a discontinuity in life than a New Testament Christian knows. We think of death and we do not look forward to it, and we do not look forward to one in which we have to suffer physically, but we know that there lies beyond death the presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the infinite joys of which we read in the word of God and which we cannot now fully understand. But David did not have the fullness of the hope that we have.

There is a further expansion now of the covenant in verses 12 through 17 and in the verses that are set forth here, in verses 12 through 17, we learn that there is a part that Jonathan has in this covenant. And that is, to be true and faithful to tell David the truth about his condition and his relationship with Saul, and he extracts from David a promise with regard to himself and his family. That we have mentioned in the verses, the verses 12 through 17. Let me read again verse 14 through verse 17 of chapter 20. Jonathan writes.

“And If I am still alive, will you not show me the loving kindness of the Lord, that I may not die? And you shall not cut off your loving kindness from my house forever, not even when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.”

In other words, when David becomes king and he reigns in peace as king, he extracts from David the promise that he will continue to deal with Jonathan’s family in the goodness of which he speaks here.

We know, of course, that that is precisely what David did and later on in one of the great chapters of 2 Samuel, there is the story of Jonathan’s son, who was lame on both his feet, but to whom David extended the kindness of the Lord. In chapter 9 in verse 1 of 2 Samuel, we read, “Then David said, “Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” The son, for whom David shows the kindness of God is Mephibosheth. I have a friend in the ministry. We discussed this passage once. I asked him if he had ever preached on it, for I had preached on it. And he said, “No, I’ve never preached on it because I’ve never learned how to pronounce his name.” [Laughter] Mephibosheth. Later, in this series, the Lord willing, we’ll deal with Mephibosheth. But that was the result of the promise that Jonathan had extracted from David here in this chapter.

Now, of course, when we think of David and Jonathan and the Lord God, and especially the relationship of David to the Lord, Jesus Christ, we know from the word of God that David is an illustration of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Biblically speaking he is a type, an example, and an example fitted by the word of God to reflect the Lord, Jesus Christ, and the ministry that would come long after David.

Let me just point out a few things very quickly, that link David with his son, his greater son. His name means “beloved.” No one is more beloved than our Lord, Jesus Christ. The uniqueness of David in the Old Testament is seen in that he is the only Old Testament character with the name David. As you know, many of the other names are names that sometimes a multitude of people possessed. But only one person is named David. The uniqueness of David stands out when we think about the son of David, the Lord Jesus, who would come, we can understand the reason that David, even in his name, is unique. He was from Bethlehem. Bethlehem as you know means the house of bread. And if there is anything that is expressive of our Lord, Jesus Christ, it is Bethlehem because he is the bread of God, which has come down from Heaven and he, too, was born in Bethlehem. He was of beautiful countenance, it is said with reference to David.

Now, of course, we do not have any physical representation of our Lord, but we do have some physical statements, some spiritual statements made about him that reflect the beautiful countenance of our Lord, even in the psalms of the Old Testament and the prophecy concerning him. In the 45th Psalm, we read, “Though art fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Thy lips; Therefore God has blessed Thee forever.” And, in the New Testament, when our Lord gives his first sermon in Nazareth, we read, “They marveled at the words of grace that poured out of his mouth,” in accordance with this 45th Psalm.

David was a shepherd and our Lord is presented in the New Testament as the ultimate spiritual shepherd. We read in the New Testament that he is the good Shepherd, who gives his life for the sheep. He’s the great Shepherd, who perfects the sheep and

brings them to spiritual perfection. He also is the chief Shepherd, who at his Second Coming will reward the elders of the church, as Peter points out in 1 Peter chapter 5.

I guess the thing that stands out, particularly, is David’s great victory over Goliath. Goliath, as many Bible expositors have contended, and I think I agree with them, won a great victory over Goliath as the figure of Satan, because, ultimately, the victory of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is a victory over Satan and sin.

As the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts it, in the 2nd chapter of his epistle, “Since the children share in flesh and blood he, likewise, himself, partook of the same; that through death he might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.” So the struggle with Goliath is a struggle, typically, between our Lord and Satan. And the theories of the atonement that set forth the ways by which the Lord Jesus has become our Savior, include just such an aspect, our Lord shedding his blood to overcome Satan that we might be delivered from the thralldom, the slavery that is ours by reason of sin.

Now, of course, when David cuts off the head of Goliath and takes the head into the city of Jerusalem in token of his great victory, I at least think and others as well, of John’s vision of the Lord Jesus in Revelation chapter 1, where we read, “When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man and He laid his right hand upon me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last and the living One; I became dead and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades.” So I can picture David, coming back to Jerusalem with the giant’s head in his hand, which he has cut off, and entering into that city as typical and illustrative of the Lord Jesus having shed his blood for the sins of sinners and then ascending and entering heaven for those for whom he has died with the tokens of victory in his hand from henceforth and forever, the eternal head of the church, the one who has the keys of death and Hades.

So now, there is, I think, a very clear indication of the fact that in Scripture, David illustrates the ministry of the Lord, Jesus Christ. And I would call David a type of him. That is the Old Testament in the illustration of his life and ministry, gives us a foreshadowing of the ministry of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now, in verse 18 through verse 23, the covenantal plans are set forth and they agree that there will be the shooting of the arrows. And by the shooting of the arrows, Jonathan will let David know the results of his time at Saul’s table and how that reflects Saul’s attitude toward David. So they discuss the shooting of the arrows and then, in verse 30, or rather verse 24 and following, the details are set forth. David gives Jonathan an excuse and Jonathan is to use the excuse that there is a sacrifice that is to take place at his home and, therefore, he’s in Bethlehem, which he’s not. And Jonathan is to express that excuse to Saul, if Saul notes that David is not at the table. First day they eat, Saul doesn’t say anything about David’s absence. But the second day, he does, and he asks and Jonathan replies with the excuse.

Now, the way Saul responded to that is the clue for Jonathan and for David to Saul’s attitude. And so we read in the 30th verse, “Then Saul’s anger burned against Jonathan and he said to him, ‘You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! [This is an expression that means, essentially, you perverse rebel.] Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now, send and bring him to me, for he must surely die.’” And Jonathan answered and said, what has David done to provoke this? He’s not done anything. As a matter of fact, he’s done things that would be good for you. And Saul, in his anger, hurls his spear at Jonathan, to strike him down. And Jonathan, who is a slow learner, has now known that his father had decided to put David to death.

So they then now work out their plan. A little boy is obtained by Jonathan. They go out into the field and David is hiding. And the arrows are to be shot. And we read in

verse 37, “When the lad reached the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad and said, “Is not the arrow beyond you?” And that was the sign that David should flee. And the chapter concludes on the note of David being unable, really, to flee and coming out to see Jonathan one last time, which proves that strong emotion may conflict with the best laid plans.

So David and Jonathan wept upon each others shoulder, but David the more. I like that expression in the Hebrew text. It means something like, literally, until David magnified. And it’s magnified or grew great in mourning, is the thought. So David mourned to excess and one can sense love that Jonathan had to David and the love that David had to Jonathan.

Now, that’s essentially, I think, the major details of the chapter and I’d like now to reflect upon the relationship between Jonathan and David as reflective of the relationship between a believer and the Lord, Jesus Christ, of whom David is a type. I do not think it is fantasy to think of Jonathan’s devotion to David, the coming king, as analogous to our devotion to Jesus Christ. And if so, think of the glory of Jonathan’s choice first of all. Saul has said, “Do I not know that you are choosing the son of David to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness.” I would consider that to be very similar to the choice that individuals make when they, by God’s grace, have come to understand who Christ is and what he has done, and have given up everything if necessary for that one love which is the eternal love.

Now, I want to underline one point that when we read here about Jonathan’s choice, we do not mean that this is a self-initiated choice. This is a divinely initiated choice. And every choice that we make that has to do with the Lord God in Heaven that is a true choice, is a God initiated choice. And our devotion to Jesus Christ is something wrought within our hearts by the Holy Spirit. So in Jonathan’s case, it was an utter, self-sacrificial love that issued in the sacrifice of his own right as prince of the land, giving himself totally to David. Paul, later on, says, “The love of Christ constrains us because we

thus judge if one died for all, then all died.” But I like the first expression, “For the love of God constrains us.” Some translations have, “The love of God controls us.” For once a person comes to understand that Christ, the Son of God, the second person of the eternal Trinity, has loved sinners as he has loved us, how can there be anything but the kind of response that gives him the total preeminence of our lives. The love of Christ constrains us. And so in Jonathan’s choice, this is something God has wrought in his heart.

Now, let me just emphasize two or three things. First of all, note Jonathan’s full acquiescence in David’s known desires. In verse 12 and verse 13 we read.

“Then Jonathan said to David, ‘The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you? If it please my father to do you harm, may the Lord do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety And may the Lord be with you as He has been with my father.’”

So, David’s known desires for Jonathan are his commands; full acquiescence to the things that he knows David desires, thus, the proper relationship of believers to the Lord.

Secondly, there is a full recognition of David’s supremacy and his own perennial unworthiness. Jonathan, by a faith and confidence given to him, saw in David the coming glory of the kingdom over Israel. Israel had looked forward since the days of Abraham to the time when they would have their glorious kingdom and in Jonathan, David perceived the one who would be the anointed king. And so, consequently, in faith, he saw in David the one who would ultimately rule.

Now, of course, in the New Testament, we are talking not simply over the kind of rule that may have been in Jonathan’s mind, but the eternal rule of the Son of God as the son of David. When the Lord Jesus came on the scene, the apostles recognized those

things in him. At Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked them, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man am?” And some of them made certain statements with reference to the views of the people. And then he said, “But who say ye that I am?” And Peter, replying for them said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” and expressed to him in that fact, their eternal devotion to him.

When Peter was in the boat and the magnificent draft of fishes was caught, he recognized that he was not simply in the boat with Jesus of Nazareth, but he was in the boat with the Lord God of Israel. And so he replied out of the Spirit within him, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” The apostles knew what it was to be lost, knew what it was by the Holy Spirit to come to understand the mercy that God had shown to them in their lost condition and to bring them to a trust in him. They knew, ultimately, that he was the king who must reign and the king who must reign, of course, is the Davidic kingdom.

They also knew the free surrender of everything dear to his supremacy. Jonathan made the noble sacrifice of his own position for higher spiritual purposes and he surrendered more than the things that our Lord mentions when he says that “Those who are worthy of for me, will surrender houses and glens, father and mother, in order to exhibit the fact that they are mine.”

In Matthew chapter 19 in verse 29 is one of those statements of our Lord and I’d like to read it. He says: “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life.” That’s what it means to be worthy of our Lord.

In chapter 10 in verse 37 of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” Jonathan is a person who loves David, the representative of our Lord, more than Saul, gives up for him. Abraham is one who loved the Lord God more than Isaac, his son, was willing to give him up. Abraham was worthy.

Jonathan was worthy. And those who are willing to take the place that these men did, are worthy of our Lord’s love.

The name for which David fought is in the mind of Jonathan and, thus, he becomes one with David in the love that they have for the name of God. We read in verse 17, “And Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.” So he became one with David and he gave up nothing, because in the love for David and David’s love for him, everything was surmounted. And likewise, the one who loves our Lord and has come to understand all that he is to us, does not lose a thing but gains everything when he commits himself to the Lord, Jesus Christ. As Paul said, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” It’s a kind of reciprocal love. The very kind of love that we have within marriage; the kind of love in which one gives oneself to the other and the other gives oneself to one, in order that there is the unity that exists ideally, that represents the relationship of each believer to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now, I think, particularly here, of that woman that was a sinner and that wonderful little pantomime kind of incident in which she enters into the midst of Simon the Pharisee’s house with the men all gathered around and weeping out of love for him with the anointing oil, anoints our Lord, weeps, wipes his feet with her hair, wiping away the tears, and anointing our Lord out of love for him, a magnificent story. It illustrates, of course, a great spiritual truth, and the great spiritual truth is the fact that ethical revivals are always the product of evangelical revivals. That is, the kind of life that we live is the reflection of what we believe about spiritual things.

David Brainard was a great missionary to the Indians. Jonathan Edwards edited an edition of his journal. In it, Mr. Brainard said, reflecting upon his ministry, “I never got away from Jesus and him crucified. And I found that when my people were gripped by this great evangelical doctrine of Christ and him crucified, I had no need to give them

instructions about morality. I found that one followed as the sure and inevitable fruit of the other.”

How true that is! We often wonder, perhaps, why we try to constantly preach the evangelical truths of Christ’s death for sinners and of our need for trust in him, so that we, like the great men of the new Testament and the great men of the times after the new Testament, who have come to understand their need and have come to understand mercy shown sovereignly to them by the Holy Spirit, how important that is because that’s the ground of Christian living. No one can possibly live the Christian life to the degree it should be lived without that understanding.

When that woman went into that crowd of men, I’m assuming they were mainly men, and she walked in among them, they were as near to the Lord, Jesus Christ, as you are to me, and in fact, probably nearer. He had ministered among them, he had performed his miracles among them, he had taught among them and, I say, they were as near to him as you are to me. But they were as far away from him as it is possible for an unsaved person to be in the midst of an evangelical church, just like this one. They sat there, but they didn’t understand. She walked in, weeping over what had happened to her, in the knowledge of her sin and in the knowledge of her need and in Christ’s meeting that need and demonstrated before them what it means to know the Christian doctrine of salvation. That’s what she had. I’m not surprised when Jesus said, “Your faith has saved you.” For what she did was the proof that she had the faith.

So I think of that when I think of this. These other men, sitting out there, just like some of you in this audience who have heard the Gospel many times but it doesn’t really mean anything much to you. Perhaps your husband is a believer, but you’re not? Or your wife’s a believer, but you’re not? But you’ve tagged along with her and you’ve heard the Gospel and the message of the word of God has been around you and in your ears, but you still do not know what it is to have the mercy and grace of God, through the

Holy Spirit, applied by Him to your hearts. You don’t know your need and you don’t know what Christ has done for sinners.

Let me close with this. Love is the spring of self-sacrifice. That was the master passion of Jonathan, passing that of women. So David will say later on it was death, “The love of Jonathan, the love that passed that of women, it’s the power of Christian service.” No ointment is too costly, no crown too glorious, no joy too excessive at the crowning of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Therefore, I say, nothing that we possess is too precious to us to be given away to him, if it is his will.

Love is the motive power that flows from redemption in Christianity. As the Psalmist says in one magnificent little clause, as he expresses his praise to God, “Thou hast loosed my bonds.” Think of that! “Thou hast loosed my bonds!” Nothing else can measure up to what God has done for us when he’s loosed our bonds and we are free in the forgiveness and the life that Christ gives.

Alexander McLaren, in another place, said, “Take the motive power of redemption from sin out of Christianity, and you break its main spring so that the clock will only tick when it is shaken,” and there’s a lot of shaking going on in evangelicalism today. Shaking of the clock in which the main spring is broken. And so we have all kinds of suggestions by the Christian church to make up for the lack of this passion, this motivating passion of divine love, but nothing will do the job but the knowledge of redemption through Jesus Christ, which the Spirit brings, will do.

Jonathan is worthy just like Abraham was. I guess the appeal of Jonathan, if I were to make an analogy, the appeal of the love of Jonathan and David and particularly, the love of Jonathan since we are centering on that, is the appeal that is found in our Lord’s words to Peter. “Peter, lovest thou me?”

So I say to you in this audience this morning, and any who ever hears this over the radio and the tape, “Lovest thou me?” Speaking for our Lord. “Lovest thou me?” Are

you like some of the men in the gathering in Simon’s house that didn’t understand what was happening? Or are you like the woman who did? “Lovest thou me?”

May God help you to reply as Peter did, finally, “Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you.” My appeal to you is that simple appeal. May God in his grace so open your heart that you see what Christ has done in the light of the really fundamental things of life and may God give you the grace to put first things first. May you come to know the redemption if you do not know it, the redemption from sin in the blood that was shed on Calvary’s cross and may it so touch your heart that your life is fundamentally changed. May God so do that for his glory.

Let’s stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for the blood that was shed on Calvary’s Cross because it expresses to us the fact that the Lord Jesus loved us and gave himself for us. Clear out the cobwebs of our mind and heart, enable us to see ourselves as needy, and our Lord as the dispenser of the eternal remedy of redemption from sin. If there should be, Lord, some in this auditorium who have not yet come to that trust in Christ, give them no rest nor peace until they rest in him.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.