



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

John 16: 5-15

Spring 2023

"Sweet Sorrow"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth. Well, we are in John chapter 16 and we're going to look at verses 5 through 15. This is 'the upper room discourse', and if some of you are visiting it begins in chapter 13; and there we read, "Now before the Feast of Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." (vs1). So we begin with the announcement 'He's departing out of the world' —and that is the background of this whole discourse.

He informs them later in that chapter that He's going to be betrayed, and He's going to leave this world. And then chapter 14 begins with these disillusioned disciples, who had thought the kingdom was coming, and He begins, "Do not let your heart be troubled..." (vs1). And throughout this He's encouraging them. They're sorrowful and He's telling them 'not to be sorrowful.' He's giving them the reason for that, and I'll return to that after I read the text. So we begin reading here with chapter 16, verse 5,

<sup>5</sup> "But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?'" <sup>6</sup> But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. <sup>7</sup> But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. <sup>8</sup> And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and

judgment; <sup>9</sup> concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; <sup>11</sup> and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

<sup>12</sup> "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. <sup>13</sup> But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. <sup>15</sup> All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

John 16: 5-15

Now I read through my notes in preparation for this service every week—and there're times when I think, 'There are a lot of trees in that forest, and it's hard to get the overall picture.' So, I'm going to right now give you the forest; it's basically this: You're discouraged; you're sorrowful; but your sorrow is going to turn to joy. You need to be encouraged because 'My leaving, My departure', He was saying to them, 'is to your advantage; because I'm leaving, I will be able to send the Holy Spirit to you, and He'll have two ministries: One to the world, to convict it of *sin*. You'll never be able to do that in your own strength and power. He's coming, and He will convict, through your ministry, the world of sin.' And *secondly*, "He is going to guide you **into** all the truth", (vs13) ... I think that probably should be understood, 'guide you **in** all the truth' ... ('the truth that I've revealed to you.')

So that's the reason for the encouragement He gives here: The Spirit of God is coming and He will empower your ministry—and it'll be very effective. So, 'You're sorrowful now', He tells them, 'but you'll be joyful later.'

Well let's bow in a word of prayer, and ask the LORD to bless the reading that we've just done, and to bless our time of study in it together.

Father, we thank You for Your goodness to us. We thank You for all that we have in Christ, the blessings that are ours. One of the great blessings we have is the Holy Spirit; we cannot overestimate the blessing of that. Do we think about it much? Perhaps not like we should. But in this great discourse, the Lord reveals wonderful things about Him and what He would do for these disciples in their grief and sorrow—and what He is doing for us now. May we live by the Spirit. Paul talks about 'walking by the Spirit'; we need to do that. We need to follow His leading and we need to act in His power. And He gives us power to do amazing things—that's the life He's given us. We thank You for that. Help us to understand these things as we study through them this morning; and build us up in the faith as a result of that and encourage us that we might go out from here and be lights in the midst of this world.

LORD, we have the great privilege of praying for the saints—and praying for those who are not saints and praying that You would convict them, as the Spirit of God will do. We pray for the material needs of some, Father, who are before us. LORD, we pray Your blessings upon them. Bless all of us. If we're in good health, if we are in a comfortable situation financially, if we're free of injury, Father, we could be in a accident at any moment of the day when we're out on the roads, or wherever we are. There are so many dangers that surround us. As Calvin said, "If we knew all the dangers that were there, we'd never leave our house." But You protect us, and we thank You for that.

And if we're in health, and enjoying a comfortable situation, (as I think most of us are in this room), we give You thanks for that.

Things can change in a moment and that's why it's so necessary that we be men and women of the Word of God to fortify our souls for the day of trouble—and it may come.

May You fortify us from this text this morning, Father, give us a great glimpse of Your goodness to us, Your love for us, and the provision You've made for every one of us in Jesus Christ, having sealed us with the Holy Spirit. We thank You for that, thank You for Him.

We thank You for Christ, who made this all possible. That's why He left; it was necessary that He depart. It was necessary that He go to the cross and die—otherwise we would be lost forever. We thank You for His work of salvation for us—and for You sending Him. It's in His name we pray. Amen.

(Message) One of Shakespeare's most famous lines is from the first balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, when she told him, "Parting is such sweet sorrow." People have wondered, 'How can sorrow be sweet? It's a contradiction.' Maybe the teenager in love isn't always logical, (neither are some old guys), but actually it makes good sense.

We see that in John 16, where Jesus spoke to His disciples about His 'parting', and said in verse 6 that it had caused them "sorrow." And yet that *sorrow*, as we learn, would be *sweet*. He indicated that in the next verse when he told them it was, "to their advantage" (vs17), that He leave them. And before too long, they would understand the blessings the Lord had won for them at the cross.

But in the short term their sorrow would only grow. John witnessed the crucifixion; he stood at the Lord's mother's, (Mary's), side at that time and watched the painful sight of the Lord suffering for three hours on the cross. I doubt that scene ever crossed his mind that he did not have a sense of *sorrow* as he thought about it. —And yet, it was very *sweet* because he knew that that is where Christ *bought* his salvation. He was redeemed at the cross; the payment was made there; and Christ declared, "It is finished." (Jn 19:30). There was nothing more for the sinner to do but receive the work that He's done. Now that's sorrow—but that's '*sweet sorrow*'.

But there are other reasons the Lord's parting was *sweet* and to their advantage. The Holy Spirit would come. Jesus called Him "the Helper, and He would help them in many ways." (vs7). Jesus spoke of that earlier in chapter 14, (vs26), how the Spirit would "teach" them and "remind" them of things. And He comes back to that here, telling them that the Spirit would "guide them in all the truth." (vs13).

But He would also have a ministry to the world that would assist them in their evangelism and that's where He begins this passage on the Holy Spirit. He tells them again about his departure; then He says in verse 7, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." Then all would be *sweet*.

But, He first had to depart. He had to die on the cross and make atonement; otherwise sin would remain unpunished and unremoved—and they would remain unfit for the Holy Spirit. He could only send the Spirit, and they could only receive the Spirit, if Christ's mission took place—and that His mission was successful.

Of course, He could not fail in His mission, which was to cleanse His disciples, all His people, of sin and guilt and, "render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb 2:14). So, He became "a curse for us", (Gal 3:13), suffering the curse of the Law in our place to satisfy God's justice—and in doing that, deliver us from the penalty of death and from the devil himself; whose hold on us was through our sin and guilt.

That's what He accomplished by leaving and by going to the cross for them. It saved them from judgment; it delivered them from the devil; and it made them fit for the Helper. So it was to their advantage: For they would become different people; they would have new understanding; they would have new courage. The Lord would change them and change their ministry; it would be a Spirit empowered ministry—and a world-wide ministry.

In the next verses the Lord explains how the Spirit would work in the world. He would bring conviction in three areas: He would convict the world concerning *sin* and *righteousness* and *judgment*. So, He would be the world's prosecutor.

That's different from His ministry to the disciples. Back in chapter 14, the word *paraclete* or "*Helper*" has the idea of *advocate*, or a *defense lawyer*. He helps us

overcome the guilt and sense of unworthiness that can overwhelm us because of the accusations of our own heart or the charges made by the devil himself.

But to the *world* the Spirit does the opposite; He is the counselor for the prosecution. But He doesn't argue his case before God, the Judge, but to the unbeliever to bring conviction leading to repentance.

So the *world*, here, is the world in all of its *parts*, (the Jew and Gentile), not the world in all its *people*. The Spirit doesn't convict and convince 'all without exception', but 'all without distinction'. This is who the Lord gathers: *His people* throughout the world, from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation—down through the ages. It is a supernatural work but it is a work He does through the church, and generally through the preaching of the Gospel by applying truth to the conscience in order to persuade and convict the guilty.

It is necessary work but something beyond human competence. The Spirit is necessary because the world is blind to its own condition and the spiritual reality of life. "It lies in the evil one", John wrote in 1 John chapter 5, verse 19. And it lies in him placidly; it's like a sleeping baby in the arms of its parent; it's comfortable in its spiritual darkness. Paul said Satan, "has blinded the minds of the unbelieving." (2 Cor 4:4).

So the Lord's disciples shine the light of truth, the Word of God, into darkened hearts which the Holy Spirit makes effective—illuminating that Word to bring conviction leading to conversion. The Lord then develops this in more detail in verses 9 through 11.

*First*, He says the Spirit convicts the world, "concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me." (vs9). Notice, the Lord did not say, 'concerning *sins*', plural, but "*sin*", singular. He convicts people of their condition—which is one of *rebellion, lawlessness*, from which *sins*, plural, proceed. The reason for human rebellion is *unbelief*—that's the root cause of all sin. That's what Paul wrote in Romans 14, verse 23, "Whatever is not from faith is sin." That's the condition of all mankind.

People naturally resist God; they don't believe His Word; they don't believe that they are lost and they don't believe in Christ—that He is God's Son and man's Savior.

And left to the disciples, or to us, they never would believe. That's the reason it was to their advantage that the Lord leave and the Spirit come, because He can bring conviction and awareness of guilt. He can do what we cannot do.

Well, that happened immediately on the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on the church in Jerusalem. He came on the people, "like a violent rushing wind", (Acts 2:2) —in other words, 'With great power.' They left the room where they were waiting, went out into the temple 'speaking in tongues', in foreign languages, not gibberish but in the languages of the people that were there. It was miraculous.

And Peter then began to preach—and he preached with power. The man who a month and a half earlier had denied Christ three times and cowered before a slave girl, became bold—courageous in his witness, clear in his witness. He proclaimed to thousands of people that Jesus is Lord and Christ—Christ, "whom you crucified." (Acts 2:36). That wasn't a message that was easily received; that wasn't a pleasant message to hear. But he in boldness said, 'You crucified Him.' (ibid.).

And then what happened, Luke wrote, "They were pierced to the heart and said... 'Brethren, what shall we do?' " Peter told them, "Repent...and be baptized." (Acts 2: 37-38). —And about 3000 did! But not because of Peter's zeal or eloquence. If that same sermon had been preached the day before, the results would have been very different. But now the Holy Spirit was there; and because of His *effective prosecutorial ministry* in convicting sinners of their sin, of their unbelief—they were convinced and thousands believed. And He does that today.

R. A. Torrey was an evangelist and later a pastor/teacher of the Moody Church in Chicago. One night a stranger was in the meeting whose gaze was riveted on Mr. Torrey all through his sermon; and afterward the man came to him. He was a life-long gambler, who earlier that day had met a friend, (a former gambler), who had urged him to come with him that evening to hear Mr. Torrey preach.

As he spoke, the man broke down and wept. He said, "Oh, I don't know what's the matter with me. I feel awful. I've never felt this way before in my life." Mr. Torrey

said, "I know what's the matter with you. You're under conviction of sin; for the Holy Spirit is dealing with you." And he pointed the man to Christ and the man was converted there, that moment. Many other conversions followed at the church as people came under conviction of sin and were brought to faith in Christ.

The Spirit of God is at work today, just as it was in R. A. Torrey's day, as it was on the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, doing the greatest miracles of history: Regeneration, sanctification, (and someday, glorification). Some people today pine for the miracles of the apostolic age; physical healings and resurrections, (and I confess, it would be wonderful if we had those). But those aren't the greatest miracles.

The miracle of the new birth and the transformation that follows from that—the freedom from the enslavement of sin and the glorification that comes, that's the greatest miracle. As great as the raising of Lazarus was, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, I would argue, was even greater. It transformed a proud, brilliant rabbi into a humble, self-sacrificing apostle and missionary. It changed him from a zealot who hated Christ and hated His people, into such a lover of the Lord and of the lost, that even his enemies confessed that he and his friends had “turned the world upside down.” (Acts 17:6). And that is for today as well, that miracle happens every day—but it wouldn't have happen at all if Jesus had not left the disciples.

*Second*, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of *righteousness*; “...and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;” (vs10). The “righteousness” is Christ's righteousness which was proved by His departure from this world through His death, through His resurrection, and His ascension into heaven. The world judged Jesus as a blasphemer and crucified Him as a criminal. But God vindicated Him, and demonstrated that He is righteous by exalting Him.

By doing that, God overruled the judgment of the world and declared Jesus to be ‘His Son with power, worthy of worship, and to be believed on in the world.’ And when we do believe on Him, we have His righteousness—it's imputed to us.



The world has its own standard of righteousness, which it thinks it achieves in its own efforts through morality, and ritual, and through religion. But true righteousness is seen in Christ—and that righteousness is flawless perfection. He's the *standard* and *source* of righteousness—which cannot be *achieved*; it can only be *received* as a free gift. And it becomes ours through faith in Christ alone, by trusting in Him. And in that trust, at that moment, we're declared righteous; legally acceptable to the Father, guiltless and righteous.

And the Spirit convicts the world, the elect, throughout the world of the devil's doom. So He convicts of *sin*, then He convicts of Christ's *righteousness*, (which we receive through faith), and *thirdly*, concerning the devil's doom and concerning judgment because the ruler of this world has been *judged*.

Well, that's already happened. It happened at the cross. That is where Genesis chapter 3, verse 15, was fulfilled and 'the serpent's head was crushed'. His plans and his domain have been utterly defeated. Christ has already had His victory parade, His "Triumph". The Roman generals, when they had a particularly spectacular, significant victory over an enemy were given 'A Triumph' by the senate. And the general would come into Rome, through the city, and into the Forum, parading all of the treasures of the victory with the captives chained behind him—displaying his great victory.

Well, that's the image we have of our Lord and what He'd done; in Ephesians it's described: And in Colossians 2, verse 15, there, it is stated that He has this 'triumph' as He ascended into heaven having "disarmed the rulers and authorities", and "made public display of them". Satan's defeated.

Now he, Satan, still is at work; he still deceives, he still fights— but he is a defeated enemy. We are victors in Christ. That is a past and permanent judgment—but it has implications for the future: He, Satan, will be "cast into the lake of fire" along with all who remain in unbelief, (remain in their sin and in the evil one) —and therefore are doomed along with him. (Rev 20:10&15).

So conviction of these things, in these three ways, is an *act* and *ministry* of grace by the Spirit of God to turn the lost to Christ. The order here is significant: Man's fallen condition is established first. And then the position of the two powers: Christ is proved to be righteous and true—and Satan to be judged and doomed.

When a person is convicted of sin, the choices are clear: To obtain righteousness in Christ, (which is an alien righteousness, not one of our own)—or to remain in one's sins and be carried off to judgment. In the Holy Spirit's work of drawing people to Himself, (in what is known in theology as *irresistible grace*), there may be some initial resistance to that drawing, but it will not ultimately prevail—the Holy Spirit overcomes it.

Paul's an example of that. He was in the synagogue when Stephen gave his final sermon. And Stephen was so effective in what he said in the power of the Holy Spirit that none could overcome his arguments and his statements. Well *Paul* was there, (Saul was there), and he gave his approval to stone Stephen. Luke wrote of that in Acts 7, verse 58: They "laid their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul." He got rid of Stephen— but I don't think he ever got rid of Stephen's words. They were still on his mind, there on the Damascus road. They had prepared his heart for that moment: Then Christ appeared to him in glory, 'brighter than the noon day sun', (Acts 26:13), and the Holy Spirit convicted him and converted him. That was when the *persecutor* became the *apostle*.

The world would resist the ministry of the apostles. It would hate them—the Lord has already warned of that; He had warned of that earlier. But the Spirit's ministry would overcome, and will overcome, and is overcoming the world's opposition. The apostles would soon learn that it was to their advantage that the Lord leave them—and that would make the *sorrow* of His parting *sweet indeed*.

But the Lord tells them that they were not yet ready for that. In order for them to be effective in the world, they would need to have a greater understanding of the things

of God. They did not have that yet. He had much to tell them, and He had very little time to do it. And what He had to say to them, 'they could not bear at that time', He says. (vs12). They needed greater maturity; they needed greater capacity for understanding; they needed more instruction. The Lord now promises them that; He promises that the Holy Spirit would give them that. He would teach them, and give them understanding of the truth.

So now, in verses 13 through 15, the Lord gives them instruction on the second work of the Holy Spirit. He's explained His work to the world, and now it's to them—the Spirit's ministry to the disciples and how He would help them. The Lord calls Him "the Spirit of truth", (vs13)—the One who conveys and reveals truth. He would guide them "in all the truth", which reveals more about the Spirit than His function only; it also reveals His nature.

The Spirit is not some inanimate power or influence. He is a guide; and that takes intelligence to be a guide—which indicates that He has personality. We covered this previously but this passage makes it all the more clear. The Spirit's personality is also evident from the grammar that is used here, the pronoun that is used of Him. It was used back in chapter 14, where the Spirit is referred to as a "He", not an 'it.'

John could have used the neuter pronoun. In fact, as we pointed out a few weeks back, grammatically that would have been the correct thing to do because in Greek an adjective modifies the noun with the same gender. So, since the word "*Spirit*" is neuter, you would expect the pronoun to be neuter as well—which is an 'it'. But in what seems to be a deliberate effort to make the point that the Holy Spirit is a 'He', John was less grammatical—he seems to really have 'broken the rule' to make the point that the Spirit is a person by using a masculine pronoun.

As I said, John did that earlier in chapter 14, verse 26, when he recorded that the Holy Spirit would 'teach them and remind them of all things.' That itself indicates very clearly that He is not an *influence*, a mere *power*. No, He's a person; and here the Lord promises even more. The Spirit would "guide them *into* all the truth"; and 'would tell

them what is yet to come; and will give them further revelation, truth, that they were not able at that time to bear.'

[Now some of the best manuscripts of the Greek text have, in this verse, the preposition *in*, rather than *into*. The New American Standard Bible translates it, *into*—it follows a different reading. But it's probably "*in*", that is the meaning and the proper word. The Spirit would "guide them *in* the truth." That, as I say, is a better reading and it gives a little different sense to the promise; which is, 'the Holy Spirit would guide them *in* the truth that has already been revealed, the truth about Christ.']

Jesus is the truth. He said that in John 14, verse 6, "I AM the truth...". And the Holy Spirit would lead them within the revelation Christ had given them in order to amplify it and lead them into its implications. And as the Spirit guided them further along that way, the Lord said, "He will disclose to you what is to come." (vs13c).

Now that's often understood to refer to eschatology, prophetic truth, future things: as for example, the Book of Revelation. But the context does not seem to support that. What the disciples had difficulty understanding were the events that would immediately come: The Lord's crucifixion, His resurrection and ascension. That most likely is what is in view here—at least principally. It doesn't rule out the other, but principally, it's these immediate things that they're troubled about.

The Lord was promising them that through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit the apostles would produce the New Testament. The Spirit would remind them of what the Lord had said and done, and teach them the meaning of it so that they would understand all that they had heard and all that they had seen—and all of that is about Christ. The Lord said of the Spirit, "...He will not speak on His own initiative...", (vs13b), 'but only what He hears.' The Spirit's message isn't different from the message of Christ. Rather, His teaching *unfolds* Christ's teaching.

The Lord elaborates on that in the next verses, verses 14 and 15: "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you." The main

mission of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ. "The Spirit would be self-effacing", as J. I. Packer put it, "directing all attention away from Himself, to Christ."

That is the touchstone of a truly Spirit-led, Spirit-filled ministry—it is Jesus Christ. And if we understand who Christ is, what He has done, who He is, what He is doing and will do, then if we understand that, there will be excitement, real excitement; fundamental, substantive excitement.

Joy is the second of the nine virtues of the Holy Spirit, (listed in Galatians 5, verses 22 and 23), which He produces in us as He guides us in all the truth about Christ and the Word of God. That's the Holy Spirit's New Testament and New Covenant ministry—to glorify Christ. And in doing that it fills us with joy and excitement—and a genuine proper motivation to go out and serve. The Spirit of God does not draw attention to Himself; He draws attention to Christ; that's a touchstone of a Spirit-led ministry.

Now, having said that, we should know all about His person and work, (you can buy books that are very helpful). The person and work of the Holy Spirit instructs us on who He is and what He does. And we should reverence the Holy Spirit as God; He is the third Person of the Trinity, equal with the Father and Son in being, power, and glory.

But His mission is not to glorify Himself. His mission is to glorify Christ and make Him glorious in the eyes of others in His person and work; His life and death, resurrection, ascension, and in His present high priestly ministry at the Father's right hand. He's to unveil all of that for us so that we will magnify the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And some day the Lord Jesus is coming back as King and Judge of the earth. In verse 15, the Lord promised the 11 disciples that the Spirit would disclose all of that to them—the future as well as the present. And they would understand these things; He would, as the Lord says, "disclose" all of that to them. So they would directly benefit from the Spirit's ministry.

Still, the promise is indirectly for us today, (this is the promise made to them but it's for us as well). He is our guide, He leads us in the truth, and we understand the Bible through His ministry. Other Scriptures teach that; we give a list of Scriptures that teach the Spirit's ministry in illuminating us.

It's the ministry of the *illumination* today, though; it's not the ministry of revelation. That has taken place; that is finished. And it's been finished with the completion of the Canon with the New Testament.

So we are not seeking new revelation, (and when we hear about people talking about 'new revelation', they don't understand that the Spirit of God has done that with these men). Today's ministry is that of *illumination*; the Spirit *guides* us in all the truth, (meaning the New Testament, and not outside of it). Whatever contradicts the truth delivered to the apostles is not of the Spirit. He illuminates our minds; it is a life-long process—and it is gradual. Peter wrote that we, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet 3:18). Well, growth takes time: Just as physical growth takes time and occurs over the years, so Spiritual growth takes time.

But we must respond to the Spirit's leading. We can't grow apart from the Spirit. We can't understand this truth, in which we think and we are to develop, apart from the illuminating ministry of the Spirit. And we're to respond to it—that's implied in the word "guide". (vs13). We are responsible for our growth and maturity; we're responsible to follow His lead.

But that process never ends. Dr. Johnson put it this way, "The picture is that of a man entering a large and broad land, (which he has inherited), and then gradually exploring, possessing, and enjoying that land." We will continue that exploration and appropriation throughout all eternity—it will never end. That's the riches that we have inherited—and they are inexhaustible. We will go from glory to glory; we'll go from truth to truth; we will learn more—and we'll never come to the end of what can be learned and gained.

And this was theirs, (the disciples), and it's ours, because He went away. They were full of sorrow at that time, but 'it was to their advantage', the Lord said, 'that He leave.' (vs7). It was a cruel death. We cannot think of it, and all that the Lord suffered on the cross for us, and not have sorrow. But at the same time, it is *sweet sorrow* because His death obtained life for us. It obtained the Holy Spirit for us; and through the Spirit we have Christ in us. He, the Lord Jesus Christ, is seated in the heavens at the right hand of the Father, praying for us right now. But He is God; He's God the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, therefore omnipresent and present in our hearts right now through the Holy Spirit.

We are rich! We have inherited a large and broad land—a glorious land that we should be exploring every day and growing in the life that the Lord has won for us, (at great cost), at His victory at Calvary. It's all of Him—all of Him. "Salvation", Jonah said, "is of the LORD." (Jon 2:9).

And it is. Do you have it? Notice again, verse 9, what condemns a person. It's not theft, or murder, or immorality, other terrible sins—it's *unbelief*. Why is that so damning? Because it rejects the only One who can save. Jesus Christ is the only Savior, because as God the Son, He is the only One who could take away our guilt by dying in our place.

So if you've not believed, recognize your sin and separation from God. Trust in Christ. Receive from Him forgiveness, and cleansing, and eternal life. He's done everything; it's for us to simply receive it. May God help you to do that.

*(Closing Prayer)* Father, we give You praise and thanks for seeking us, and then buying us—purchasing us for Yourself with the precious blood of Your Son through His effective sacrifice for Your people...which is not a few, it's myriads and myriads of souls that You've saved. And we who have believed give You thanks and recognize it's all of You, (and not of us), and that someday we'll be glorified.

Help us in the meantime, to walk by the Spirit, to know that we're victorious in Christ, and live that way and live as good and faithful witnesses for You. We have the power to do that through the Spirit. We thank You for that.

And now LORD we pray that you would bless us and keep us, and make Your face shine on us and be gracious to us, and that You would lift up Your countenance on us, and give all of us peace. And we pray this in the name of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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