

But Now: The Hinge of History

Studies in Romans

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Bible Text: Romans 3:21

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We are turning this evening for the first time in... well, since the beginning of June we are turning back to the book of Romans.

Since I was gone so much in the summer and since many of our people were also gone and in and out, I thought since this is an ongoing series that I am told is going to take 25 years to complete anyway, I would wait until we were all together to recommence the studies in the book of Romans.

Tonight we are reading in chapter three, reading a brief section, verse 21 to the end of verse 26. Romans chapter three verse 21.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.¹

Finishing the reading at verse 26 the Lord will add his own blessing to the reading of his Word for his name's sake.

This Bible reading commences the second main section of the epistle to the Romans. Let me very quickly refresh your memory that chapter 1:16-17 state for us Paul's great theme that he is going to be expounding throughout this epistle. That theme I have summed up in one sentence that says what Paul is really seeking to do in this epistle. The theme of Romans 1:16-17—

¹ Romans 3:21-26.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.²

—the theme of that is that the revelation of God has provided a perfect righteousness in Christ for guilty sinners on the ground of which they are justified by faith without any works of merit of their own. That revelation is a glorious and powerful message for the whole world.

Now that is what Paul is expounding. He commences in chapter one verse 18 with a section that reaches through to the end of verse 20 in the third chapter. The theme here is sin and death by nature in Adam.

The gospel denounces the guilt of sinners. Paul has just said in the gospel is revealed the righteousness of God. Now he shows the need for such a righteousness, a desperate need it is. Throughout the rest of chapter one he explores and expounds the spiritual and the moral state of the Gentile nations and shows how deeply they have fallen into sin.

Then in chapter two he comes around to deal with the Jews and that stretches though the eighth verse of chapter three showing that despite all their advantages—having the written law, the Word of God given to them by men inspired of God—having all the advantages, yet they were without God. They were deep in sin. They were equally guilty.

Then you have that great section, chapter three verse nine to verse 20 where he draws it all together and he shows us that the whole world—as he says in verse 19—the whole world is guilty before God. And verse 20 says by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

In other words, the law of God can convict you of your sin, the law of God can condemn you for your sin, but what it cannot do, it cannot ever save you from your sin. It can never justify the ungodly.

So that is the first section. Now in verse 21 of chapter three he commences this second major section of the epistle. Here the general theme will be righteousness and life by grace in Jesus Christ.

In the first section the gospel denounces the guilt of sinners. In this great section the gospel announces the grace of the Savior. Here Paul is showing God's way of meeting man's need for a perfect righteousness.

Now obviously verse 21 is the first verse in this section.

² Romans 1:16-17.

“But now the righteousness of God without [or apart from] the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.”³

I am not going to go any further than that verse tonight. In fact, I may not even get through that verse tonight. It is a huge verse even though it is so simple to read and even so brief that we could memorize it in a matter of seconds.

Here Paul picks up on some of the key elements of his great thematic statement in chapter one and verse 17. There he said in the gospel is revealed the righteousness of God. Here, again, he is picking up the theme of the righteousness of God. In chapter 1:17 he spoke of it being revealed. And here, again, though he uses a different verb—and I think there is significance in that—it is almost synonymous. He is, again, dealing with the revealing of this righteousness to the world.

Now I want you to look at 3:21 tonight. I want you to consider it very carefully.

“But now the righteousness of God without [or apart from] the law is manifested [or has been manifested], being witnessed by the law and the prophets.”⁴

As Paul deals with this great subject of this text what he is doing is laying down a doctrinal statement. And this doctrine is crucial to the entire epistle to the Romans. God has now... and underline that word because we are going to pay particular attention to it tonight. God has now revealed a way for sinners to be righteous in his sight without any personal obedience to law. And the law itself, with all the Old Testament Scriptures bears witness that this is the only way of salvation. He has revealed a way for sinners to be righteous in God’s sight without any personal acts of obedience on their part. And the law itself and the prophets, they all get together to say, “Amen, this is—from Genesis to Malachi, and now we can add from Matthew to Revelation—this is only way that God has of saving sinners.”

Now in working out that statement Paul deals with three important aspects of the gospel revelation and we are going to seek to attend to those tonight.

Sometimes it is good to give a roadmap. I am going to be very kind to my old map. I should have given him a roadmap how to get to our house. Do him all the good in the world. Of course he had a cell phone. He could have just have called. He did call after meandering half way around the world getting within a half a mile of where we live and then going around and around and around in circles. It is good to have a road map to know where you are going.

If you read Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons, he almost always gave a roadmap of where he was going in a text.

³ Romans 3:21.

⁴ Ibid.

So these three important things I will set before you. First of all, he deals with the time of the gospel revelation, “But now...” Now. Then he deals with the theme of the gospel revelation which is the righteousness of God apart from the law. And then he deals with the testimony to the gospel revelation which is the law and the prophets, the voice unitedly of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Now that is a lot to get through in one lifetime, nevermind one night.

So we are going to take the first thing and we will see how far we get this evening.

The time of the gospel revelation of the righteousness of God without the law.

“But now...”

Now I want you to watch something very carefully when you are reading the apostle Paul. For Paul time always was divided into then and now. His mind always seemed to revert to that dichotomy, then and now. When you read his writings you will find he used this division to trace the saving grace of God in his own life. Read, for example, in Galatians chapter one and you will find him giving a word of testimony. He loved to give his testimony. Maybe we could learn something from him there. Paul was always ready to give his testimony. And as he looked back at what he was, then he came to a point in time. It was the changing point for his entire life and destiny. And he said, “But when it pleased God to reveal his Son in me...” Then he went on to tell about his life and service in Christ.

In other words he said, “That was then. I was a Jew. I was this. I was the other thing. That was then. But now after God has revealed Christ in me, after God has saved me by his grace, this is now and it is totally different from then.”

For Paul there was that point of change, that focal point of his entire life and he used the then and the now to describe it. He uses the same then and now outlook to describe the complete revelation of God to people in their sin and then the complete revolution that that revelation causes.

When you look in Ephesians chapter two you find he says, “[You] were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world...”⁵ et cetera. There you are dead, depraved, darkened in sin.

But verse four.

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.⁶

⁵ Ephesians 2:1-2.

⁶ Ephesians 2:4-6.

A little further in that chapter he says to the Ephesians:

Remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ... but now in Christ.”⁷

You see, for Paul there was always then and now. That is how you describe the Christian life. In fact, in many ways you could say that is what defines being a Christian. There is a then, born in sin, shapen in iniquity, serving the lusts of the flesh and following the devil. Thank God there is a now, a might transformative now, a mighty intervention of grace that deals with the then, changes the then sinner into a now saint of God. That is what defines a Christian. Christianity is not something you are born with. Sin is what you are born with. Christianity is the revelation of saving grace that deals with the situation that then you were in and brings you into a new relationship, a new state, a new standing by the grace of God wherein the old sin is dealt with. You are brought right into a new relationship with God. Then and now.

Now I have to be careful because that is not how he is using it in the text. I am simply showing you that this is a division of time that Paul constantly reverted to in his manner of thinking. And I am suggesting it is a division of time that you and I need to revert to constantly in our manner of thinking.

I am going further in suggesting to you—in fact, I am not only suggesting, I am saying it on the authority of this Word—that unless you can remember that in time past you were without God, without Christ, without hope, but now you are in Christ, transformed by grace; unless that then and now is true of you, whatever else you have got in the way of religion, it is not God’s salvation.

You must have the then and now testimony.

Now in our text Paul is using this same idea to trace the progress of the revelation of the doctrine of justification by faith without works and he says, “Now it has been manifested.” The word “manifested” means it has been made known, it has been made evident, it has been made clear.

I said that he uses here a different verb from the one in verse 17 of chapter one. There he says in the gospel is revealed the righteousness of God. The word that he uses there is the word that gives us the name for the last book of the Bible. It is called the apocalypse or the revelation, the unveiling.

And he says in chapter one verse 17 that in the gospel the righteousness of God is constantly being unveiled.

Man, there is a thought for a preacher to run with.

⁷ Ephesians 2:11-13.

Do you know, if Paul is right there—and of course he is right—but if Paul is right in that statement, do you realize that what is masquerading as gospel preaching in the vast majority of Protestant pulpits is not gospel preaching. Do you realize what I am saying? Gospel preaching is not a sweet little sob story to tell people to come to Jesus and get their problems met and all the rest of it.

Oh, thank God it calls men to the Lord Jesus and it deals with their sin and it deals with their problems, but when the gospel is preached according to this book, it is unveiling the righteousness of God, always. It is unveiling to men the marvelous story of how God has revealed and made available to men a saving righteousness. That is what is revealed in the gospel. That is what... and Paul is deliberately using not only the word, but the tense of the verb. That is what is constantly being unveiled before men in the gospel.

But now here he uses a different word and he uses a different tense of the verb. What he is saying here in this part of Romans is simply this, that this righteousness of God has been made manifested, has been made known. It has been made clear and it remains so.

Now think for a moment. What does that mean? Does that mean it wasn't known before? Some people say so, but they have missed the boat on that one because the very context tells you the Old Testament witnesses to this. If the Old Testament is witnessing to what Paul is saying is now made known, he is obviously not saying it was never known at all.

What he is saying is this, not that it was completely unknown, but if I could give a loose translation that comes to me not from my own genius—for if it would come from that it would be a long time coming—but it comes to me from a very famous German scholar and he said what Paul is really saying is now the righteousness of God, it now lies in full view. I think that is a beautiful way of putting it. The righteousness of God apart from the law, how to be saved, the way of salvation, the way to heaven, he says it now lies in full view.

You take your Bible—and we did this before in the early studies in Romans—and you will find that the way of salvation is to be found in the book of Genesis. The way of salvation is to be found in the book of Exodus. The way of salvation is to be found in the book of Leviticus. You can go right through the Old Testament and the way of salvation is there set forth.

But now it lies in full view. God has revealed it. He has made it known. And what Paul is saying here is this is not something I have discovered. This is not a human discovery. This has not come as a result of Pauline theology as the scholars like to call it. This has not come as the result of the genius, the religious theological genius who was Saul of Tarsus. This has not come by the investigative process of Church councils. This has not come by any process of the mind of man. It has come by a divine revelation. God has brought it to full view.

It is God's action.

What he is saying also, of course, is if this is what God is saying and it makes the way of salvation plain and evident and clear, then outside of this gospel all is darkness or deception; whereas in the gospel all is light and all is truth.

Notice that I have been emphasizing it has been made clear. In other words God is, according to Paul, has made this revelation at a point in history.

“But now...”

This now stands in total contrast to everything that went before. Did Moses speak of the way of salvation? According to the Lord Jesus he did. He spoke of me.

Did Genesis 22 show the way of life as Abraham had to confess to Isaac, “God will provide himself a lamb”? Yes. That prefigured the gospel.

Did Exodus chapter 12 preach the gospel on that great Passover night when they took a lamb for a household and they sprinkled the blood upon the lintel of the doorposts and God said, “When I see the blood I will pass over you”? Was that preaching the gospel? Yes, it was.

You can go right through.

“But now...”

Now something has happened that never happened before. Now. What is that now talking about? What has happened?

Paul is preaching here that there were events. In fact, I would like to borrow the language of a school of theology that I really despise for the most part and that is what is called Neo Orthodoxy, Barthianism and all the rest of that stuff I don't have much time for it. But there is in their vocabulary a way of talking about all the events in the plural that surround the person of the Lord Jesus Christ from his birth to his resurrection and they call it the Christ event.

In other words, it is one indivisible event. You can't fragment the birth from the death or the resurrection from the life. There is a unity, an indivisibility to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is what Paul is talking about here. He is talking about the great Christ event that constitutes the gospel, his coming into the world to save sinners, his life in obedience to the law of God, working out a seamless robe of righteousness, his death as a death of propitiation and expiation to satisfy God and reconcile sinners, his resurrection from the dead in proof of our justification.

This is the event.

Do you remember right at the very beginning of the epistle this is what he talked about?
He said:

Paul a servant [or a slave] of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh [that is his birth]; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.⁸

He has come full circle. He is saying this is what has happened.

Now no more Moses, no more Elijah, no more Isaiah, no more type, no more shadow, no more prophecy. Now the reality. Now Christ has come. God has done something unique whereby he has laid out for all men to see in full view, he has laid out his way of saving sinners. In other words, Paul is saying the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world is the pivotal point of all history.

I said he liked the then and the now. The pivotal point between then and now, what was it for Paul? It was the coming of Christ.

You look at secular history and, of course, the secular historians can really make no sense of history. It is very difficult for them, anyway.

But when they go through the old ancient histories they see various points of pivot, various point of supreme importance and they always, of course, seem to celebrate the worst of men and the worst of deeds.

We all grew up listening to how great Alexander was, an absolute egocentric maniac that would damn a whole world, wash the shores of nation by nation in blood because his poor [?] soul needed some other place to conquer. That is what the world thinks is pivotal.

But when Paul comes to history he says look at then and you can put your Nebuchadnezzars and your Pharaohs and your Alexanders. They are all then. But now, God has stepped into time. Now the Son of God has come. Now God has laid bare for all to see one way to God, one way to life, one way to heaven. This is the significant point, what I like to call the hinge of history. This is it.

“But now...”

And, of course, for Paul that could not be merely philosophical. That could not be merely that is true of the world in the big picture. What use is it saying that is true of the world if it doesn't immediately have a life changing impact upon me?

⁸ Romans 1:1-4.

So for his personal history it was the very same thing.

“But now...”

Man, when Paul said that I think in his mind he went back to the Damascus Road. He remembered that day when God met with him, when the Son of the living God met with him, dealt with him, convicted him, blinded him in his beauty and his glory and raised him up a new creature in Jesus Christ.

“But now...”

I wonder, my friend, do you realize—and I must confess that I feel my total inadequacy here. I wish I had the voice and tongue of an archangel. Do you really begin to grasp the significance of God’s entrance into this world of ours? He didn’t just send a message. He didn’t just send a messenger. He didn’t just send an angel. He did not just do some great works. He came. He came.

And at the risk of repeating myself from this morning, I want you to let this sink in. The coming of God’s Son into the world, the incarnation of the second person of the eternal trinity is the most important thing that ever has happened in all of history. There is nothing to compare with it. And if we believe it, we can’t just say we believe it the way we say that we believe that the days of the week are Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday and so what? If we believe this, then it must grip our hearts. It must govern our hearts. I can never be the same again once I have come face to face with this life changing, world changing reality, this hinge of all history. God has come. God has come.

That is it.

“But now...”

Do you see how Paul has done this? He has brought the world right to the gates of hell. He has swung open the gates of outer darkness. He has let us look into the abyss. He said, “There you are. Guilty. Are you a Gentile? Guilty. Are you a Jew? Guilty. Are you religious? Guilty. Are you irreligious? Guilty. Are you young or old or man or woman? Guilty. And there is the law of God. It is standing with the roll of condemnation in its hand and with the sword of judgment in its other. There you are at the very gates of hell and you can do nothing about it.”

“But now...”

But now God has done something. God has done something. Ah, not only something. He has done—if I could reverently say it—he has done the greatest thing that God ever did. This makes the creation of angels look like nothing. The creation of the universe, it is just the expression of God’s love. It didn’t cause God any difficulty. But for God to do this is the involvement and the expression of all the infinite perfections of his being.

It is the bankrupting—if I could use that word—it certainly is the full expenditure of all the treasury of hell when God gave himself in the person of his own dear Son. There was nothing left to give. That is the significance of the incarnation. That is the significance of the “But now...” And that is why I say, listen, you tell me you believe this. Then it has to have a personal application. This “But now...” cannot be simply the hinge of world history. It has got to be the hinge of the history of your life and of my life. I can never be the same again once I recognize and confess that God has come. That is the event that is the pivot here, “But now...”

Before leaving that little phrase, I have to say that many very eminent scholars and commentators deny that Paul is referring to time at all in using the phrase, “But now...” And they say that the connection is not temporal, but logical. The adverb is not an adverb of time, but an adverb of relation.

Let me give you an example. I am not going to multiply these, but if you turn over to Romans chapter seven verse 17.

“Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”⁹

In that statement—and it is exactly the same little Greek phrase—he is not using the phrase “Now then...” as far as time. What he means is, “Now, then...” as we say it, as a logical progression, carrying on the argument.

“In this state of things...” It usually has that force.

Now I think this is one of those cases—and I am glad to see that some eminent theologians agree with me in this case. This is one of those cases where the Holy Spirit deliberately uses a word or a phrase that we cannot tie down to either or. And I think the Holy Spirit is well able to use a word like that so we will stand back and give it its full meaning.

Paul was thinking about time here. Do you see verse 26?

“To declare, I say, at this time...”¹⁰

So he was using the word with a reference to time. But that doesn’t exclude the idea of a logical progression and as I thought of this I thought what a beautiful truth this is, a beautiful statement.

Verse 19 and 20, guilty without a hope in the world.

Verse 21, “But now, in this state of things, God has revealed his righteousness for us apart from the law.”

⁹ Romans 7:17.

¹⁰ Romans 3:26.

What is Paul saying here? He is saying—and I think this is something well worth emphasizing because this is the theme of this whole passage, of this whole book. He is saying, “Listen, this righteousness without the law is all of grace.”

Again, look at this. The end of verse 20. Guilty, condemned, hopeless.

Verse 21. In this state of things, but now, in this state of things the righteousness of God apart from the law has been revealed.

If you take this passage of Scripture to see what Paul is emphasizing—and we will have cause to do the same—he is emphasizing that this way of salvation does not depend on our works. He is emphasizing there is no merit in us. He is emphasizing it is all of grace. He is emphasizing this in many ways.

Look at verse 24, for example.

“Being justified freely...”¹¹

The word “freely,” John 15:26 is translated “without a cause, without any cause in us.”

Justified freely.

Now you would say that was enough. But he adds, “By his grace.” Not saying the same thing. The first time “freely” is saying it is by grace. Now, again, he is saying it is by grace and then for good measure he adds again it is by grace, for it is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Paul is piling on one thought on top of another saying this is all of grace, grace, grace, the whole thing is of grace.

Well, here it is the same in verses 21.

In this state of things, the righteousness of God apart from our obedience to the law lies in full view for God has come in Christ to give us a righteousness of his doing, of his providing.

As he wrote to Titus in chapter two and verse 11, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”¹² And that is what Romans 3:21 is all about.

I want you to get this tonight. For this is the focal point of not only history, but the gospel.

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared.”¹³

¹¹ Romans 3:24.

¹² Titus 2:11.

God has broken the silence. God has broken into time and space. God has come into history. God has become a man. All of grace, all of grace to save guilty sinners such as we.

Now this is the revelation and this is the time and the manner of its giving.

Can I point this out to you before we leave it that it is a finished revelation? I have emphasized the tense of the verb. It has been manifested. It is not being manifested. Oh, in a sense it remains plain, but it has been manifested. I don't want to get into an English lecture because that is way beyond the scope of any Irishman, but I don't want to get into English grammar particularly, but if you have ever had to study the verb—it doesn't matter what language you are in—the difference between an aorist or what we used to call studying some European languages a past historic or a preterit, the difference between that and the perfect is this, the aorist or the past historic is just that. It is a point in the past. It is done. The perfect is something that was done then, but its effects are still with us.

Now listen. This righteousness has been revealed. The revelation is complete. It is past. It is over and done with. But the effects are ongoing. And I like that, you know, because as I was saying this morning that deals with a certain false prophet and false claims to revelation. That deals with your Joseph Smiths and all the other pretenders to be the vehicles of new light. And I will make this statement to you. It doesn't matter whether he is a Mormon or a Baptist or a Presbyterian or a Methodist or anything else. Anybody who comes to you with new light, a new message, a new revelation, you know he is a false prophet.

To this word and this testimony let them come and any man who cannot come and bring you to this book and give you from this book, from this revelation of Jesus Christ completed never again to be added to in this age. Any man who cannot come to this book and show you from this book his position and his teaching is not bringing you divine revelation. He is bringing a diabolical deception. This is finished.

So when somebody comes along to you now and says, "In order to be saved you have got to do this, this, this and this. In order to be saved you have got to be a member of our church, baptized in our way, join in our way, live in our way, do this, do this and do the other thing," you know you are dealing with a false prophet.

Now some of the things they are telling you to do may make good sense. But the righteousness of God apart from law, any law. We will deal with that, God willing, in the next occasion. The righteousness of God apart from law has been manifested. All that God has to say about being saved is said in this book in connection with Jesus Christ. And anything else is an imposition of man, a deception and a delusion of the devil and must be seen to be such and repudiated by every Bible believer.

¹³ Ibid.

You see, this now has changed everything. There is nothing dark anymore. It sounds strange to say that when you think of all the arguments that are going on in Christendom today.

But listen There really is nothing dark anymore. It is only the convoluted thinking of men that wants to make the simple and plan confused and questionable. There is nothing dark God has said it. Look, “I have laid it out there in full view. There is no doubt. There is one way of salvation. There is a righteousness without the law in Jesus Christ. There is a way of justification by faith alone in Christ alone. And there is no room for confusion or for doubt. It is all plain.

Now we will come in due course and when you have a little more time and when I have a little more voice and we will look at that theme of the righteousness of God apart from the law. It is one of the most radical statements Paul ever made, but it is one of the most necessary. We will look at that.

But what I want you to go home with tonight is this. I want it to grip you and never let go of you again that we live in God’s now. We live in God’s now. He has changed everything. That is the real significance, for example, in the statement, “Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.”¹⁴

We live in God’s now that Christ has come. He has changed the world. He has changed history.

I want to ask you. Has he changed you? That is where the great doctrine becomes a saving reality in your life.

I trust you are a now or a then and now believer. I trust you can say, “Yes, Lord, that was my then. I remember I was without God. I was without Christ. I was without hope. But now I am in Christ Jesus. Now I am redeemed. I am justified and saved.”

Make sure you have that testimony. Don’t leave this place without it. Nothing else will save you from going into that abyss of darkness but a personal, saving, justifying faith in Jesus Christ.

Let’s bow our heads in prayer.

In just one moment this meeting will be over. You will be free to leave. In dealing with anything to do with the incarnation of the Son of God, I always feel my inadequacy. I feel more than I can express. I see more than I can describe. But I trust tonight that you will understand something. If you don’t understand much, I trust you will get before God and cry to him that he will make you understand more, the life changing understanding, you will understand something of why God emphasizes this point in time, this hinge of all history. God has come personally.

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 6:2.

Can you ignore that? Can you simply shrug your shoulders and go on your way to think of some of the follies, never mind the filthiness of this world? Can you simply live your life as if this all were a Hans Anderson fairy tale? And God says, "Now, I have done something unique."

God has come. Have you met him? Has this truth gripped your heart? Does it govern your life? Are you saved? Are you living in what Paul would call then at that time, are you living in God's now, embracing his beloved Son?

If you are not saved, now you need to be without delay. And one thing you can't count on is time. You are one heartbeat away from eternity. Make sure you get to Christ. He has come to save sinners. Thank God he is able and willing to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him.

Dr. Barrett and Mr. Brame and I are here to point you to Christ. That is our number one priority. No matter who else is to be saved for whatever other reason, you need to get to Christ. We would love to point you to him. Come have a word with us. Get to the Savior.

As I said this morning, I appeal to those of you who say you are saved, you say you believe all this and perhaps you are living as if it didn't matter, saying it with your lips, but not having it govern your life. Oh, it is time to let truth govern your life.

If I believe this, I believe it, it must, it must and it will guide everything else.

If you are a Christian and you have lost sight of this glorious now, that is sin. That is backsliding. Thank God there is a way of forgiveness and restoration.

I invite you to seek the Lord.

Father in heaven, we stand amazed at the mercy of God, at that love that we were hearing of in the song tonight. It does surpass the ability of angels and men to tell it. It does surpass the ability of this preacher to define it or describe it. But, oh God, we thank thee for it, the mercy in God that sent Jesus Christ into the world. We thank thee that when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gracious God, we bless thee for that earth shattering, earth changing, soul saving event of Christ coming to live and die and rise again. Hallelujah, what a Savior.

Lord, we long that souls will come to Christ. We long that those who know the Savior, who confess him would have this truth so intimately and immediately upon their hearts that day by day and in every situation this is what will govern their lives. We think of young men and young women here. They have life to live if God will spare them. Thou hast given them health and strength. Thou hast given them intellect and talent, ability and opportunity. Lord, may they not waste the good gifts of the Lord on things that don't

matter. Modern examples of that foolish thought having to have new worlds to conquer when all the time they need to be so in love with the Lord Jesus, so enraptured with the thought of God coming into the world to save them that they live their lives as a reaction to that and give themselves to serve him.

Lord, set every Christian here ablaze with the love of God that some reflection of the love that drew salvation's plan, some reflection of that grace that brought it down to man would burn in our hearts that we may go out from this place determined to live in God's now, free from condemnation, in victory over lust and sin, in separation from the world and the flesh and the devil and in consecration to our living and loving Christ.

Answer prayer, oh God, part us with thy blessing, keep us in thy fear and grant that thy grace and mercy and peace and the power and the unction of thy Spirit will be our portion both now and until thou dost either come or call us home. We pray for thy glory in Jesus' name. Amen.