

Eternal God in Human Flesh

Building a Christian Mind

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It's wonderful to be back in front of you and to open God's word together, and to come back again to our series on "Building a Christian Mind." And I repeat and review quite a bit just for the benefit of those that are joining us for the first time, and also to keep it fresh and the direction that we're going clear in our minds. My friends, your mind and mine cannot work properly if we're not aware of certain basic truths, and also to have an awareness of how it is that we know these things to be true. So our minds depend upon the nourishment of knowing that there is a God, as shown by his presence in creation, in the Canon of Scripture, in conscience, in conversion, and ultimately in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Someone who's not aware of that is not thinking properly. Someone who resists that and denies that is someone who is in darkness and can only stumble their way to a miserable end. Our minds depend upon a knowledge that Scripture is true. We must know that the Bible is true, and we must know why it is true. On what authority do we receive Scripture? We receive Scripture on the highest authority of them all, what Jesus Christ has said. Jesus Christ affirmed the Old Testament, he laid the groundwork for the New Testament, and based on his authority, we know that this book of 66 books and no more that we hold in our hands, we know that it is reliable because it comes from the God of truth, and the God of truth could never lie about any matter of faith, doctrine, history, science, any place that you go.

The word of God is completely trustworthy, and we must know that, and we must know why we believe that, and that's why we spent time on it, because these things, beloved, these things do something that is very countercultural in our minds, and this is all still introduction. These things establish authority. We are not moral free agents who are entitled to determine what we think is right and wrong and go on our own way. We are not moral free agents who are free to say what is true or what is not true as if truth depended upon the verdict of our personal opinion. The universe is not like that, beloved. The world is like that, and the world thinks that way, that truth is determined in a subjective way, that what I feel determines what is true, but that's not reality. That's not the way things really are, and there is an authority in God. There is an authority in Scripture to which we are accountable, to which we must be true, and that in itself is a colossal collision with the spirit of the age in which we live. If we are going to have a Christian mind that functions properly, we must know these things and embrace them. To do anything else is to commit moral, intellectual, and spiritual suicide. We must realize that these things are of preeminent importance, and these things are of greater importance

than the way that we happen to feel in any particular day. These are the things that show us the light, that show us the narrow path, that point us to the path that leads to life instead of going with the world and going with the crowd and going even with our own inward desires down the broad path that leads to eternal destruction. Why would we do that? Why would you want to do that just for the sake of a few fleeting moments of autonomy against the God who made you and created you? And so we emphasize these things.

There's another aspect of authority which we've been looking at more recently as we build a Christian mind, and that is how to know Jesus is Lord. How to know Jesus is Lord. We saw in 1 Corinthians 12:3, that no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. I remember I've told you this on many occasions, and I say this simply in case it would help someone recognize perhaps the lost nature of their own soul. I remember so clearly as a young man before I was a Christian and spiritual conversations would come up, or even as I was thinking and talking, conversing with friends, there was this strange, curious inability that I had to freely, openly say simply the name Jesus Christ. I couldn't do it. I couldn't do it. Sometimes I would force it out, but there was obviously something within me that was restraining me from saying his name, and certainly from truly confessing that he was Lord of my life. I was in darkness. I was in chains of sin. I was a child of the devil at that point, as shown by my personal interaction with the simple name of our blessed Lord.

Well, my tongue isn't restrained anymore about confessing Jesus is Lord, for which I give the praise alone to God, but we need to know how we know that Jesus is Lord. How do we know that Jesus is Lord? That's what we've been looking at in the past several times that I've been in the pulpit. We've looked at the whole manner of Old Testament prophecies. We saw how the life of Christ was predicted by the Old Testament prophets and then fulfilled in the New Testament. Same thing with his death, so clearly foreshadowed by the Old Testament sacrificial system, so clearly specified in details, 29 different prophecies fulfilled in the last 24 hours of the life of Jesus before his crucifixion. These things are supernatural. God, the sovereign God who knows the end from the beginning and who orchestrates and steers the course of individual lives and all of human history and every nation who steers all of it according to his wisdom, steered the whole unfolding of millennia and providentially prepared the culture and the times for the precise entrance of Jesus Christ onto the scene and Christ fulfilled all of those prophecies and we know by that that he is Lord. We know that he is Lord by his resurrection from the dead. Who gets out of his own grave by his own power? Who does that, beloved? I ask you, who does that? The one who is Lord is the one who does that.

Last time, two weeks ago on Sunday, we looked at the whole theme of the kingship of Christ in Scripture and even the placard, the charge against him, hanging above him on the cross read, "The King of the Jews." He's King, indicating he is Lord. He is over all. He is sovereign authority. And so as we look at these things, beloved, we see that we are looking at the eternal son of David, the one that David called his Lord in Psalm 110, "The LORD said to my Lord." We see one who has all authority.

I just want to step back and slow down just a moment to let this all sink in because it's so critical. When we say that Jesus Christ is Lord, what we mean by that in part is that he is Lord over nature. When he speaks to the sea, it obeys and stops moving. When he speaks to the wind, it obeys and stops blowing. When he speaks to Lazarus in the tomb and says, "Lazarus, come forth!" Lazarus must obey because Jesus is Lord with all authority. He's Lord over history. Nations rise and fall at his pleasure. Presidents come into power in the United States by his good pleasure and by nothing else. He's Lord of eternity. There is a coming day when every man, woman, and child that has ever lived will stand in front of Christ and hear his final destination proclaimed, "Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. Welcome, enter into the joy of your Master," to those that belong to him.

And you know, when you realize these things, you realize that there's so much more to Christ than what we're accustomed to hearing, don't you think? I mean, we're just, you know, we rejoice in the fact that Jesus is a friend of sinners. We rejoice in the fact that he's a good shepherd. But beloved, understand that we cannot – here's the thing – you and I, we cannot pick and choose what we like about Christ. We can't simply like the fact that he's gentle and lowly and then disregard his Lordship and authority and his command over our soul. I mean, the same one who is the Good Shepherd is also the one who is going to bring the wrath of God to bear on a godless world as shown in Revelation 19. You know, and I realize Martyn Lloyd-Jones speaks this way, I'm going to quote him in a moment. You know, I realize that it's far more popular and comforting and desirable in our natural condition to just want to focus on one aspect of Christ. I get that. I get the fact that you could fill the church a lot more easily if you just always spoke soothing words to people, told them what they wanted to hear, and when they tell you what to preach on from the pulpit, do as they command. I realize that. I get that. But we don't preach to build a human audience. We don't preach to please men. We preach to honor the full counsel of God and to honor Christ in all of his offices, prophet, priest, and king. He is Lord and his word must be obeyed, both in our individual lives and in the way that a church is led.

Now I promised you a quotation from Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Here it is in his classic series on the book of Romans, some 14 volumes if I'm remembering correctly. He says this in the first volume of page 101. He says, "It is the first great pronouncement that we make as Christians that Jesus Christ is the eternal and everlasting Son of God. We say that he is not a man who has achieved divinity." In other words, explaining what the good doctor said, it's not that Christ was born into the world as a natural man and then he lived such a good life that he worked his way up to godhood, which is the theology of Mormons and as false as the devil himself. Lloyd-Jones says, "We say that he is not a man who has achieved divinity, as so many have said, he is and ever was the eternal Son of God."

This is the Christ that we proclaim, the one who was before the beginning of time, the one who ushered in creation, who established time and nothing has come into existence apart from him, the gospel of John says. And so, beloved, we must, you must, for the sake of your own soul, come to grips with the Lordship of Christ and not make him into someone after your own image, not reduce him to someone who simply always does what you want him to do, you know, who enforces the politics that you choose or would like, who always comforts you and never chastens you, who sends everyone to heaven because

that seems more comfortable than the alternative. No, we have to take him as who he is, especially, beloved, especially, beloved, inside his own church. The church belongs to Christ. It's his. It's not ours to do with as we want. And our loyalty vertically to Christ is greater than our loyalty to men. We serve men, we love men, we want to help them and lead them, but our loyalty is to Christ foremost, and we accept whatever the consequences of that may be.

Beloved, the reason that a man or woman lives that way, the reason that a church lives that way is because there is a recognition of the Lordship of Christ and it is utterly his authority that matters. Nothing else matters by comparison. And so, if that's going to be the guiding force in a man or woman's life, a young woman's life, if that's going to be a guiding force, you need to know why you believe that. You need to know why you embrace that. You need to know who it is that you're following as Lord and the manifestation of his Lordship over all, over the world, over you. To do that, over the next two or three messages, I want to take you to the gospel of John. So I invite you to turn to the gospel of John right now. There is something really fascinating as you look at the gospel of John in its global picture, as you look at it as an entire unit of writing, an entire unit of literature. What you see is that from beginning to end, the gospel of John is emphasizing the deity of Christ, deity meaning that he possesses, that he is the full essence of God on display. The fullness of God dwells in Jesus Christ in bodily form.

So when you look at John 1:1, for example, you see that it opens on that very theme. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He was God. He was with God, somehow fully identified in all of the essence of God, and yet somehow a distinction within the Godhead, recognizing their personal distinctions, which are eternal in nature. In verse 14, we read, "And that Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." The Word was with God, existing before time. He became flesh in time, and as John is writing this gospel, he's saying, "We saw him for ourselves. We saw him with our own eyes. We touched him with our own hands. We heard him with our own ears. We saw him. We saw this Word that became flesh. We saw his glory. Our testimony is reliable." And, beloved, that testimony is reliable not simply because of the human witness of John to what he saw, but that he wrote and he spoke under the influence of the omnipotent Holy Spirit who was guiding him in what he had to say, who guided him to write precisely what God wanted him to say, so that what we read here is not simply a human document, it is the very word of God because God breathed it out through his servant, the Apostle John.

And so, the gospel of John opens on that theme. Now, go to the end of the gospel of John, John 20. John 20. These bookends are so very crucial to see. You remember the Apostle Thomas, sometimes called Doubting Thomas; he had not seen Christ in the first appearance after his resurrection and so, when we come to chapter 20, verse 24, we read about him and as you read what we're about to see in these next several verses, beloved, it is so important for you to connect it to the way the very gospel opened. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And then John lays out for us over the course of 20 chapters as it was ultimately divided up, John lays out for us the words and ministry of Jesus Christ. What's the point of all of that? Why did he do

that? Well, he uses Thomas as an example to show the effect that it is supposed to have on your heart and the way that you are to respond to the gospel of John and all of Scripture. Beloved, beloved, beloved, and trust me, I'm sincere when I say that. Beloved, beloved, John did not write this gospel simply to give us some interesting factual information and we would walk away unchanged. He didn't simply write down things for historians and compromised scholars to debate back and forth like they're playing a scholarly game of badminton. "I think Jesus said this." "Well, I think he said this." And just batting it back and forth and never coming to any conclusions. No, this word speaks with authority and it's designed to produce a work of faith in your heart and lead you to a place of submission in your heart, and if you don't come to that point, you've missed the entire point of the gospel of John, as I will show you right now.

John 20:24, remembering the way the gospel opens, "Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.'" It was a defiant statement of unbelief that he was making there. It's as if he were pounding the table, the original language is so emphatic here. He's pounding the table saying, "I will not believe unless this happens." He wouldn't take it on their word.

So what happened? Verse 26, "Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them." Ah, he's with them this time. We don't know why he wasn't there the first time, but he's with them now and the stage is set. "Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.'" The resurrected Christ came to his weak faltering disciple and said, "Here it is. I give you exactly what you ask for. My hand, touch it, touch it, Thomas. It's right there in front of you. Take your finger and put it inside the palm," more likely the wrist. "Here's my side, thrust with the sword of a Roman soldier. I'm bearing mortal wounds," rich wounds yet visible above, we sing today. "Thomas, here it is. Put your hand in. It's real. It's me. I'm Lord. I'm alive from the dead."

What was Thomas' response now? Thomas is making the confession that Scripture is calling each one of you to believe and to reject at your eternal peril. This is the dividing line of eternity. This is the parting of the Red Sea of forever. On the one side will be those who believe and enter into glory. On the other side will be those who from their heart refuse to say this, refuse to embrace it, not simply say it, but embrace it. What is his confession? "Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'" "There you are in front of me. I believe. I bow. I confess your Lordship." And notice that it's not just an abstract confession. Notice that first person singular pronoun, "My Lord and my God." My friend, I ask you: have you embraced Christ like that? Can you say from the depth of your being, "Jesus Christ is my Lord and my God"? That is the confession that the gospel of John is leading you to and until one makes that confession from their heart, they have not understood the gospel, they are still in their sins, they still belong to the devil and are in great danger of eternal perdition.

Verse 29, "Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" We have a particular blessing gathered together as believers in Christ today. Christ says that those of us that haven't seen him, we have a particular blessing that is ours, that we are the privileged recipient of divine favor by making that confession and, beloved, we're not blessed because we had greater insight, we're not blessed because we figured this out on our own, we're not blessed because in our own power we came to Christ, we're blessed because God saw us, had mercy on us and drew us to Christ himself. That's the blessing. That's how we come to believe.

I keep reading in verse 30 and 31. "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that," here's the purpose clause of the entire gospel of John, "these things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." He is Lord. He is risen from the dead and he is Lord. Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Beloved, there's no need to open our Bibles if we're going to evade that central teaching of Scripture, and there's no need to confess him with our lips if we're not willing to do what he says. This is really, in some ways, the test of the proof of whether a claim to know him is true or not. You know, back in the book of 1 John, the same author, the Apostle John wrote in his letter, he said in 1 John 1:5 and 6, listen as I read, "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." Verse 4, chapter 2, verse 4, "Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him." And in 1 John 3:10, "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother." And on and on it goes.

You see, we can't save ourselves by what we do. We can't earn the forgiveness of one's sin by a lifetime of repentant tears or a lifetime of giving or anything else. We can't earn the forgiveness of any sin. The point of Scripture, the whole purpose of Scripture is to teach us that you must be born again, that you are lost and dead in sin, and that you must be born again or you will enter into eternal hell as the consequence of being a child of Adam and for the guilt of your own sin. You can't do that in your own power. So why does Scripture emphasize obedience? Obedience is the mark of someone in whom God has done a work. When God makes someone a new creation, a new life flows from that. When a new principle of life is put within you, new life comes out of that and whereas before you could not start to confess Jesus as Lord, once you are born again you can't stop confessing him as Lord. Whereas before you were restrained, now you want to proclaim it to the world. Whereas before you walked in disobedience and didn't care and looked at yourself in the mirror and boasted in your sin, when God saves you, you learn, "I hate the way I used to be. I hate my old man. I hate that sin. I desire righteousness. I want to live for his glory. I want to read his word. I want to manifest by my life the gratitude that's in my heart for all that Jesus Christ has done for me."

This is a manifestation of his Lordship, beloved, and his Lordship, the teaching of Scripture is that we should not deceive ourselves into thinking that we're Christians if we are unwilling to obey him. Yes, our obedience is imperfect. Yes, we all stumble in many ways. Yes, yes, yes, but that's not what we're talking about. We're not talking about the humble believer who stumbles along the way through weakness of flesh, besetting sins, times of weakness, and then repents. The concern is over the one, the concern is over the one who says, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, Jesus is Lord, he's my Lord too," and then lives in total disregard of his Lordship. This really isn't difficult and Scripture brings us to these themes again and again to help us, to warn us, to lovingly caution us to examine ourselves to see if we'd be in the faith. Beloved, do you love Christ? Do you believe in Christ enough to obey him or not? When it comes down to a choice between what God's word commands and what you want to do, is this a coin flip or is the decision made contrary to your desire, "Lord, I will submit to you, your will be done"?

And so, all of that to say that this is the theme of the gospel of John, the deity of Christ, and to bring out for us the implications of his Lordship for how it applies to each one of us and what our concern is. And so, when we ask the question how to know Jesus is Lord, the gospel of John has a critical role to play. As we go through the gospel of John, we see different aspects of its display of the Lordship of Christ that we see, we study, we understand, and we come to a deeper, more settled knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ and his true identity. So what does the gospel of John teach us about the deity of Christ? Well, if you want to put a title on today's message, you could title it, "Eternal God in Human Flesh." Eternal God in human flesh, and now we'll just try to go through some of these themes in the gospel of John, having laid the foundation, we'll try to go through them rather quickly.

First of all, what we see is what we've already been saying, the first point for today is that the Bible calls Jesus God. The Bible calls Jesus God, and going back to John 1 with me, in unambiguous terms, the Bible declares that Jesus is God. Let's look at those verses again just to reinforce them in our hearts and minds. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Verse 14, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, glory as the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." Now that phrase, "the Word was God," what it's doing is this, it is telling us what the quality of Jesus is, what his nature is, who he is by very essence. And what this passage teaches us is this: the deity, the divine essence, the essence of the Godhead that belongs exclusively to God dwells fully in the person of Christ. All that God is, is found in Jesus Christ. Every attribute of God is also fully an attribute of Jesus Christ. They share the exact same essence. There is no attribute of God that you could think of that you could see in Scripture that Jesus Christ does not possess. He is eternal. He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent. And so, Scripture is telling us that from the very start, you need to think about Jesus in those terms. Do not think about him, do not think about him as simply a good moral teacher and no more. Do not think about him simply as a prophet, undistinguished from the Old Testament prophets that went before him. Do not think about him like that. He is in a separate category alone, unique in his deity. The Old Testament prophets were the servants of God. They were the mouthpieces of God, but they were not God. Jesus was a mouthpiece of God directly because he is God himself.

Now, when it says there in verse 14, "The Word became flesh," what that means is that from his position as the pre-eternal second person of the Godhead, Jesus took on humanity. He added humanity to his pre-existent deity without losing any of his deity. He was fully God and he added humanity to that. One of the great mysteries of Scripture, that God entered into human flesh, God made himself known in a historical man, Jesus of Nazareth, so that as Jesus walked about, people were seeing God veiled in human flesh.

Now, just for a little cross-reference for you, Colossians 2:9 says this, speaking about Christ, it says this, "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." The whole fullness, everything that God is, dwelt in the person of Christ and still does. The Bible calls Jesus God. That settles the matter. That settles the matter.

Now, I'm going to take a little tangent here to just make you aware of a resource. I thought about preaching this, but I think I'm going to pass over it. Those of you that have had any association or interaction with Jehovah's Witnesses know that they translate, they distort, better stated, John 1 differently. They say that "the Word was a god." If you read John 1:1 in one of their translations, either the old one or the new one that they came out with a few years ago, you'll see the same thing, "the Word was a god." That little letter "a" being their effort to deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and to distinguish him from the Father, to make him a created being rather than a pre-eternally existent God. It's demonic. There's no other word for it. It's demonic because it's an attack on the truth about Christ. And one of the things that Jehovah's Witnesses do is they say, "Well, this is what the original Greek means. It means a god," you know, and they go on from there. Not going to give any greater platform for their lies than just to call attention to it so I can say this: you should be able to find, if you search my name and Jehovah's Witnesses, John 1:1, Jehovah's Witnesses, Don Green, you'll find a message where I deal with that thoroughly and show the utter impossibility of that translation. Going back to the original languages, pointing out things in theology and interpretation, that view is utterly impossible when you look at it, beloved. If you have been confronted by Jehovah's Witnesses, you have questions about that, look for that message. If you can't find it, we'll help you find it because it's out there available. I preached it in 2007. The existence of a false translation of Scripture does nothing to contradict the truth of what we're saying here. It's refutable, decisively. So that's all I wanted to say about that.

Point number 2 for this morning, perhaps our last point, depending on how this goes, is that Jesus does the works of God. Jesus does the works of God, and what we mean by this is that what God does, Jesus does. No one else can say that. No one else in the universe who has ever existed, who exists now, or whoever will exist can say anything like that. Jesus does the very works of God. For that, turn to John 5 with me in your Bibles. John 5. We'll pick it up in the middle of a discourse at verse 16. John 5:16. Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath. The Jews didn't like that because it broke their rules of the Sabbath and so on verse 16 we read this, "And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I am working.'" The Jews confronted Jesus because he had healed a man on the Sabbath, and notice what he does, Jesus appeals to God the Father as the justification for what he had done. He puts himself - oh, beloved, this is so very

important – Jesus puts himself on the level of God the Father and asserts that he has the same prerogatives to act as God the Father does. He says, "God the Father is working. I'm working also." In the context of healing a man, in the context of what is proper to do on the Sabbath that God ordained. It's breathtaking.

Now you and I, in our spiritual dullness, might read over that and miss the significance of all that Jesus was saying, but keep reading on, beloved. The Jews understood precisely what Jesus was saying, and they reacted against it. Look at verse 18, "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because," here was their motive, their reason. It's a twofold reason. They were seeking to kill Jesus. Why? Because, first of all, in their view, "he was breaking the Sabbath but," in other words, but also, secondly, "he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God." The Jews said, "By what you're saying, you're claiming equality with God." In their minds, that was blasphemy, because God is one, Deuteronomy 6:4.

Now, and so the accusation is, "Jesus, you're making yourself out to be God. That's blasphemy. You deserve to die." What does Jesus say in what follows? "No, no, no, no, guys, you misunderstood. I must have said something wrong. You took me all wrong. That's not what I was saying at all." Is that what he did? Did he correct them and say, "That's not what I was teaching. Put the rocks down because you misunderstood. Let me clarify." That's not what Jesus did at all in what follows. He, as it were in our modern colloquial speech, he doubles down on it, on the assertion. Verse 19, "So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.'" That's breathtaking. That's breathtaking. You might as well suck all the oxygen out of the room and leave us with no capacity to breathe and just feel the weight of that on our chest. Here is Jesus Christ saying, calling attention to God the Father, say, "God the Father, you know, you're thinking about God the Father, right? The God of the Old Testament as you claim to know him? Whatever he does, I do it too." None of us can say that. God the Father created a universe by his spoken word. We can't even speak a word and get someone to move ahead at the stoplight.

Keep reading. Verse 20, "For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel." And then look at what he says, "For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will." "God raises the dead," Jesus says, "So do I." And he proved it when he raised Lazarus. Verse 22, "the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him." Jesus said, "I do everything that God the Father does, including raising the dead," and the point of that is so that men would honor the Son of God, which is a reference to himself. The Son of Man is to be honored. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, is to be honored in exactly the same way that God the Father is honored. The only way that can be true is if he's God himself because Scripture teaches clearly, "You shall have no gods before me." Scripture teaches clearly, you read in Isaiah, "There's no Savior but me. There's no God but me." Over and over, these exclusive claims and yet here comes Jesus Christ saying, "I am entitled to the same honor that God the Father is, so much so that the one who does not honor me does

not honor God the Father." You cannot honor God in some vague way and deny the deity of Christ or deny his mediation, deny his atonement, try to approach God through some other way. You can't do that. If you do that, you're dishonoring God the Father. Jesus says, "It's only through me." One mediator between God and man, the man Jesus. And so for Jesus to say that he does whatever the Father does means that he is equal to the Father. They have the same nature. They share the same essence. Jesus Christ is undiminished, uncreated deity in bodily form. It includes raising the dead. He does the works of God, that includes raising the dead. It includes the matter of judgment, so that he deserves the same honor as the Father.

Now, beloved, remember what we're doing here, we're explaining and building the foundation for our minds how to know Jesus is Lord so that we can have a properly functioning Christian mind, which is in sad, short supply these days. We think it's important to try to build that up and that maybe some of the children under the course of our ministry would hear these things and be rooted in them as they go out in future years. You see, beloved, you cannot believe that Jesus Christ is lesser than God. That's not just a mistake. That's not just a poor opinion. It's a sin against God to deny the deity of Christ. To give less honor to Christ than you give to the Father dishonors the Father, because the Father sent the Son in order to do his will. If we beat and reject the Son, we're beating and rejecting the Father who sent him.

Now, let me just walk you through a few things here, and I'll finish with this point today. Here's what you've got to understand: Jesus, during his earthly life, he did more than simply verbally say that he was entitled to equal honor with God, he didn't simply verbally say that he did the works of God. This wasn't an empty boast. This wasn't like the realm of mankind in which we live today, where men routinely, falsely boast about their giftedness, that magnify themselves without justification. That's not what Christ did. He actually did the works in front of people in demonstrably verifiable ways with a series of signs during his ministry.

Let's do it this way. Let's take some time to just look at them really quickly. What Scripture claims, what I've laid out before you as the second point in this series, in this message, is that Jesus does the works of God. You could say, "What exactly do you mean by that? What do you mean that he does the works of God? That just sounds like a general statement. Where's the proof?" Okay, you want proof? John gives us the proof over and over and over again. I'm going to give you seven illustrations of Jesus doing the works of God as recorded in God's inerrant, infallible word.

Look at John 2. John 2. Jesus manifested his control over natural elements by turning water into wine. No one can do that. No mere man can do that. To turn H₂O into high quality wine doesn't happen. But it does at the hands of Jesus. John 2:1. "On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water.'"

Not with grape juice. Not with wine. Fill them with water. "And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.' So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.'" The statement there, Jesus had turned the water into better wine than they were serving. Said, "You always give people the good wine first and they don't notice when you're slipping in the bad stuff. I know good wine," this headmaster says. "This is the best wine I've ever had. Why did you do it that way?" The obvious occasion was that Jesus had done something that only God can do.

Look at John 4:46. John 4:46. "So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine." You see, if you had any questions about chapter 2, you get a plain statement there, he made the water turn into wine. "And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. So Jesus said to him, 'Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.' The official said to him, 'Sir, come down before my child dies.'" "O God, O Christ, it's urgent! My son, my child is on the brink of death! Won't you intervene and help in this desperate situation that no man can fix? Won't you do that, Lord?" Verse 50, "Jesus said to him, 'Go; your son will live.' The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.' The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, 'Your son will live.' And he himself believed, and all his household. This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee." He remotely healed somebody. I don't mean that it was a remote healing. He healed someone fully from a remote distance. That's astonishing. Only God can do that.

Keep reading. Chapter 5. He turned the water into wine. He healed the royal official's son. Now we're going to see him healing a paralytic, someone who could not walk. In verse 1, "After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids--blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be healed?' The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Get up, take up your bed, and walk.' And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked." By his spoken word, he turned a 38 year invalid into a man walking with normal human strength. Only God can do that.

Keep going in John 6:1. The fourth sign was that Jesus fed 5,000 with totally inadequate provision, inadequate by human standards. John 6:1, "After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a large crowd was

following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?'" There are not enough provisions here, Philip. What are we going to do? Verse 6, "He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.'" A denarii was like eight or nine months of wages. "One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?'" He says, "Lord, this is the meager stuff that we have but what's this to feed thousands of people?" Jesus said, "'Have the people sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, 'This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!'" 5,000 people, 5,000 men, probably more with women and children, five little loaves of bread, two little fish and Jesus feeds them all. Beloved, no man can do that, but God can.

Incidental aside here, going back to the really early days of my life, I remember hearing this story and the Sunday school materials kind of have a way of making that little boy the hero of the story. "Oh look, he brought his things to Jesus." The little boy isn't the hero of the story. Jesus is. Jesus is the one who took nothing and turned it into something that satisfied everyone doing a work of God again.

Fifthly, he walked on water. Verse 15 of John 6, "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going." Look there again at verse 19, "they saw Jesus walking on the sea." No man can do that. Walk unaided, walk in natural human feet on water, you want to try that on somebody's swimming pool sometime? These are the works of God. Jesus does the works of God and he displayed and manifested it over and over again.

We won't take time to read John 9:1 to 12, you can turn there just so I can point it out to you, but in John 9, he heals a man who was born blind from birth. In John 11, he raises Lazarus from the dead. Look at verse 38 of John 11. We kind of skipped number 6, he healed a man born blind from birth. Now number 7, he raised Lazarus from the dead. John 11:38. "Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.'"

Lord, you don't want to smell what's in there, neither do we. Verse 40, "Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?'" If you believe you'll see the glory of God. Well, Jesus is about to do something displaying the glory of God. The reason it displays the glory of God is because he did it. The reason it's the glory of God is because he is God. Verse 41, "So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice," now beloved, remember something with what we're about to read. Jesus is speaking to someone who has been dead for four days. He wasn't asleep. He hadn't been knocked unconscious and was coming back. He was dead. He was in a grave sealed with a stone in the way that they did it back then. What did he say to this man in verse 43? "He cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.'" Do you know what happens if you and I try that? We go to a cemetery, maybe you go to the grave of your mother, "Mom, come out." Silence. Grieving parent goes to the site where their little one is buried, "Baby, come out." Silence. Because we don't have that power. When Jesus says, commands someone, "Come out," what happens? Verse 44, lest we miss the point, he was really dead. Verse 44, "The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'"

Only God does stuff like that. These are the works of God. Not one of us could do one of the seven things that I've laid out for you and shown you from Scripture that Jesus did. It's because we're not God. Jesus could do it because he is.

Now, beloved, understand something. When Scripture calls you to believe in Christ, when you are commanded by the word of God to repent and believe in the gospel, you need to understand something really, really important: you are not called to believe on who you think Jesus is, you are not called to believe in a Jesus of your own making. "Well, I like to think of Jesus as this. I like to think of him as just someone who's a friend and he's kind to everyone and he gave us a great example to follow, and that's what I think about Jesus." You can't believe in a Jesus of your own making and have true salvation. To have true salvation, you must believe in the true Christ, who he really is. You don't get to make him up. You wouldn't want someone to make up an identity for you that was contrary to who you were. Someone says, "This is who Jeremy is." You say, "Well, you don't even know me. Who are you to say what I'm like?" Well, you know, we don't get to make up the Jesus that we want to believe in. You either believe in the true Christ or you're still dead in your sins.

And so, understand that when the Bible calls on you to repent and believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved, there is a specific content to that. There are specific truths about Christ that you are compelled to believe if you are to be saved. The Bible calls on you to believe in the unique deity of Jesus Christ as part of its call to saving faith. Like Thomas, you hear about Christ and you say, "My Lord and my God. My Master, I submit to you. My God, I worship you. I am no longer my own. I belong to you." I mean, what does being God and Lord mean if there's not some kind of ownership claim to it? And what does an ownership claim mean if you're free to just live any way that you want afterwards?

In the book of Romans 10, the Apostle Paul says this in verses 9 and 10. He says, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is," what? Please answer me. "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is," what? "Lord." "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Lord in the sense that he is God in human flesh, ruler over creation, ruler over nature, ruler over history, ruler over you. "For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

Beloved, by the Spirit of God, I tell you simply what Scripture says: Jesus is Lord. By the Spirit of God, we say those things with the full authority of all of deity in place. That confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that confession is what Jesus said to Peter, it is upon that confession that he would build his church. This is central to everything. Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. My dear friend, you with an eternal soul, standing on the brink of eternity, perhaps far sooner than you realize, do you believe? May God enable you from the depths of your heart to see Christ as he is presented in Scripture and respond with the same heartfelt saving confession that Thomas made, "My Lord and my God."

Gracious Father, gracious Father, in our feeble, inadequate, weak way, we have tried to lift up the Son of Man, the Son of God, according to what you yourself have said in your own word. Father, we know that we're unworthy vessels both to speak and to hear these things. We know that we have not the power to make any one person believe. We can't call men from a physical grave and make them live and, Father, we do not have the spiritual power to call a single sinner to life and guarantee. We can make the call, we can present it, we can assure them that you will lovingly receive them if only they will come, but we can't make them come. O God, we would if we could, but we can't, so we don't. And that leaves us helpless before your power and your grace. We ask you to do a work of God. Jesus said, "For this is the work of God to believe on him whom he sent." Father, do a work that men might believe on Christ and be saved. Do a work and strengthen those of us that you have already redeemed for the remaining life of service to you and obedience to you that you have ordained for us. Whether it's 25 days, 25 months, or 25 years, Father, confirm for us the work of our hands as we elevate Christ as Lord and God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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