

Unashamed of Christ

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 February 2026

Preacher: Rev Cal Morrison

[0:00] Amen. It is good, even although our bodies, our outer selves are wasting away,! and our inner self is being renewed day by day,! it is good that that that inner self who loves the Lord! can use whatever body we've been given and whatever vocal cords we've been given to practice singing His praises.

One day we will have new bodies and we will sing together with the angels of heaven to our great God and it will be in perfect harmony, I'm sure. But that's good. It's good to remind ourselves of these truths and it's good to use our instruments not for sin but for righteousness' sake.

Thank you.

Just time was difficult this week but I kept on circling back to this business about following Jesus and particularly not being ashamed of Jesus, unashamed of Christ.

So let me read Mark 8, 31 to 38. Lord, we have your word in front of us. Your very word's recorded.

[1:48] Your living word. Your word is powerful. Lord, please would you visit us as your word is spoken.

Please would you open our hearts and illuminate your word within us by your spirit. Lord, please would we encounter you through your word.

Lord, and would you be glorified. Please help me speak faithfully of your word. Lord, please help us to understand your word.

For your glory and for our good. Amen. Mark 8, 31. And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again.

And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, Get behind me, Satan.

[3:05] For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and for the gospels will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man be also ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Amen. Amen. Well, this is the Lord's Word.

We pray he blesses the reading of it. Last week, for the first time, a human answered correctly the question of the entire first half of Mark's gospel.

[4:22] For the first eight chapters of Mark's gospel, we've been dealing with the question of who is Jesus? And last week, we saw for the first time a human answering that question correctly.

The crowds were saying that he was some kind of prophet, but Peter said, you are the Christ. First eight chapters of Mark have been begging this question, leading up to this answer.

Jesus really is the Christ. And Jesus doesn't deny it. He doesn't correct it. He accepts that title. He accepts that conclusion.

It's the truth. Jesus is the Christ. But he warns them to keep it silent because they still need to understand what that means. On the one hand, the disciples are different from the crowd because they finally see who Jesus is.

But on the other hand, they have the same kind of expectation of what the Messiah will do. So for the first time, first time in the gospel, Jesus tells them plainly what it means, what they should expect.

[5:29] And the next eight chapters will flow out of this passage, what it means for Jesus to be the Christ and consequently what it means to follow him. Notice the structure.

Peter has just said, you are the Christ. And then Jesus begins teaching about the Son of Man. Do you see that verse 31? The Son of Man must suffer.

And then it concludes in verse 38, the Son of Man will come in glory. Do you see how it's bracketed by these statements about the Son of Man? And so two things to understand with this section of Scripture.

Firstly, the disciples must understand that the Messiah, the Son of Man, must suffer first and then enter glory.

And secondly, the disciples must understand that if they follow him, their experience will be the same, suffering first and then glory. Both equally sure.

[6:32] As sure as his suffering is, so is his glory sure. And so they need to understand that the Messiah must suffer first and then enter his glory.

And then if they are following him, that they would suffer first and then glory. And so let's look at this. The Son of Man must suffer. It's not just that the Son of Man might suffer.

It's not even that the Son of Man will inevitably suffer. It's that the Son of Man must suffer. It's necessary. Therefore, if Jesus is the Christ, if he is the Son of Man, then not only might he suffer, not only will he suffer, but he must suffer.

It's actually precisely because he is the Son of Man that his suffering is necessary and sure. If he were not the Son of Man, he wouldn't have to suffer.

But since he is the Son of Man, he must suffer. It is necessary. Now, the temptation for Peter and the temptation consequently for any who follow Christ is to think of his kingdom like it's any other kingdom of this world.

[7:47] To think of Christ as if he is like all the other kings and rulers of this world. And this would be to set your mind on things of man, not the things of God. His kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world.

His kingdom is not of this world. And so we see Peter with good intentions. We can sympathize with them. With good intentions wanting to say something like, Oh, Lord, God forbid that you should suffer.

Yet he misses the point of the Scriptures. The entire Old Testament has been pointing towards this. The Son of Man must suffer.

It's God's will. Peter is thinking about the things of man. He's not thinking about the things of God. You see, while Jesus didn't need to correct their view that he is the Christ, he has to correct their view about what that means.

They cannot think of a Christ that should suffer. It's just not a category in their mind. The Messiah is a winner. The victory is with the Messiah.

[8:54] He's the great king who will sit on the throne of David forever and will be a great warrior who vanquishes enemies and establishes his kingdom with justice and with peace forever.

Now, this is true. That is who Jesus is. And that is what he will do. However, who is it that is his real enemy? Who is the enemy of God?

Who is it that needs to be vanquished? Is it only Rome? Do we realize that we are all in some way an enemy to God? Do we need to be vanquished?

Defeated? That we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God? Don't we realize that the problem isn't just out there?

For them it was Rome. For us it's whatever it is out there. The problem isn't just out there. It's in our hearts. While Rome was a serious problem in the first century for Israel, an occupying force that did oppress them, they caused real pain and trouble and sorrow.

[10:04] And Jesus never downplayed the effects of oppression and evil. But thinking that getting rid of Rome would solve all of their problems

was short-sighted.

And it was the ways of man. How many of us have thought like that? How many of us have thought that as soon as this or that happens, my problems will go away? As soon as I get this, all my problems will be solved.

It's short-sighted. It never works out that way. Rome was a problem, but it wasn't the big problem. Getting rid of Rome wouldn't have solved all of their problems.

Sin is much more deep-rooted than we know. And sin is an enemy of God. And it works to dehumanize and decreate what God has made.

And the end of sin is death. And death itself, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, death is the last enemy. And so freeing Israel from Rome, will not free them from sin and death.

[11:08] They've been there before. They were exiled and they came back. They've been there before. They've been in the promised land. And yet sin and death still reigned. Freeing the people from Rome, will not open their blind eyes, or release them from the power of Satan, or free them from the kingdom of darkness.

And this is why the Son of Man must suffer. He must suffer. It's Isaiah 53. He must be pierced for our transgressions.

He must make an offering for our guilt. To make many to be accounted righteous, and to bear our iniquities. John the Baptist said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. The whole world. Even the Romans. In Romans 3, Paul says, Is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also?

Yes, the Gentiles also, since God is one. God will justify the circumcised and the uncircumcised through faith. God is the God of all. And we all need him.

[12:26] And we can all only be justified through faith. So the problem that Jesus has come to solve is not a problem only for the Jews. It's a problem for the whole world.

Problem for every human. And that is why he took on flesh. He assumed humanity so that he could redeem humanity. He experienced the whole of humanity from the womb to the tomb so that he could restore humanity in himself.

And the Scriptures testify to this over and over again. Yet it was hard. It was hard for the disciples to grasp this. We can see, at least, although Peter wanted to prevent his Lord and his friend from suffering, that it was counter to his very purpose and God's will.

It was only thinking about the things of man, not the things of God. Not only does Jesus correct Peter and the rest of the twelve, he calls the crowd and he teaches them the difference between the things of man and the things of God.

And so you see this section from verse 34 to 38 is actually an unpacking of that last little statement. You are setting your mind on the things of man, not the things of God.

[13:42] So Jesus unpacks that whole statement. If you want to know if you're thinking about the things of man or if you're thinking about the things of God, Jesus lays this out for you.

He says, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Whoever tries to save his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake and for the gospels will save it.

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? And what can a man give in return for his soul? What can any of us give in return for our soul?

I think we touched on that last time. It says in Psalm 49, Truly no man can ransom another or give to God the price of his life.

For the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice that he should live on forever and never see the path. We have nothing that we can give. Even if we gain the whole world, we've got nothing that we can give to buy back our soul.

[15:03] And only in verse 15 of Psalm 49, it says, But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol and he will receive me. Only God can pay the price for another person's soul.

And so here's the truth of it. God actually does not intend to give you your best life now. Don't believe Joel Osteen.

Don't believe the prosperity preachers. Your best life isn't now. And if it was, what a pitiful life that would be. It's a good thing.

It's a good thing. It's a good thing our best life isn't here and now. If we want to follow Jesus, we cannot still be chasing our dreams. We cannot be making a name for ourselves.

We cannot expect a life of luxury and comfort. Who we thought we were going to be, that no longer matters. Peter, he was no longer going to be a fisherman.

[16:06] Matthew was no longer going to be a rich tax collector. And Simon was no longer going to be a zealot. Now it's not that they lost who they were. Jesus said to Peter, I will make you a fisher of men.

He would catch people for the kingdom. Matthew would no longer record people's taxes, but he would record the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

Simon the zealot would no longer seek violence to advance his cause, but he would be zealous and spread in the gospel and even given his life for Jesus' sake.

It's not that we lose who we are, but we deny any hopes of being this person that we thought would be all about us.

You see, my idea of who I thought I wanted to be before I was a Christian, before I was saved, I had big aspirations for my life.

[17:08] So much so I got my own name tattooed twice on myself. How vain is that? I wanted to make my name great. Just like Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel.

My hopes and dreams, the best version of what I think I could be on this earth is nothing compared to being even the lowest person in the kingdom of God.

It's nothing. The lowest person in the kingdom of God is far greater than the best person on this world. That would still be far more glorious and far greater an experience than anything this earth could offer.

Remember Jesus said of John the Baptist, there's no one greater than John the Baptist. He's like the best of the best. Yet even the lowest in the kingdom of God is greater than him.

Isn't that something? Psalm 84, you know this, says, There is a far better life that God has for us than here and now.

[18:23] And the truth is, if we were to chase our dreams here and now, we would only lose them anyway. We would only lose all our faculties and all our riches and our body and perhaps forfeit our soul in the end.

We can't keep any of this. We can't hold on to any of this. So better to store up treasures in heaven where rust can't get to it, moths can't get to it, thieves can't get to it.

The disciples would learn in time the shock of Jesus' suffering, but they would learn that his suffering was not a defeat, but his suffering was a victory.

Now we have the benefit of looking back to see and understand that, but it still takes the Lord to help us see that the cross is Christ's victory over evil.

You see, any one of us living in this century can look back at these historical facts, but it takes the Lord to open our eyes to see that the cross was a victory over evil.

[19:37] And any who would follow him, we still need to learn what it is to deny ourselves and to take up our cross and to follow him. And so if the Son of Man went through suffering before glory, so shall we if we want to follow him.

Verse 34. Verse 34 is the first time the cross is referenced in Mark. First time. It's the first time in any of the Gospels this moment where Jesus says these things is the first time in any of the Gospels that he connects with the cross.

Now he's just mentioned that he's going to be rejected and killed and his disciples must have been thinking, excuse me, the Messiah killed? How is that even possible?

And then he talks about people who follow him having to carry a cross and they would have known this is the Roman form of execution.

How are you going to be killed and how are we going to carry a cross of execution? What do you mean, Jesus? How difficult it would have been to understand these things.

[20:52] And I still think it's difficult for us to understand these things. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his

cross and follow me.

Are you prepared? Are you willing to do that? I talk to many pastors and church leaders and no matter the size of the church, it seems that every church struggles to find volunteers to serve. It's a struggle. There's many reasons for it. It's a struggle to get people to pick up chairs never mind carry a cross. When did we lose the sense of utter privilege to serve the Lord and his kingdom and to die for him?

So, maybe we've got a sign-up sheet down the bottom looking for volunteers must be willing to deny themselves, must sacrifice much, and possibly die. Sign up forms at the front.

Who's going to sign it? This is what Jesus is saying, the reality of following him. Salvation is a free gift. But it'll cost you your life.

[22:12] But it'll cost you a life that was never going to amount to much anyway. And it'll gain you a life that is beyond comparison, beyond anything we can possibly imagine. You see, this isn't about trying, this thing about trying to save your life, you will lose it.

And losing your life for Jesus' sake, you will save it. It's understanding the inevitable end of all of these things. What is the inevitable end of chasing your dreams?

What is the inevitable end of following Jesus? What is the inevitable end of this world that we live in? The inevitable end is that it's going to perish, and it's going to pass away.

The kingdoms of this world, they rise, but they fall. They fade away into insignificance.

insignificance. There's only one kingdom that will last forever, and that's the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if you're living for this world, you will inevitably lose in the end, because everything in this world that you hold dear will be gone. Everything we hold dear will be gone.

[23:20] It's fleeting. It's all fleeting. And if you're living for the kingdom of God, you might miss out on the fleeting things of this world. You may even lose your life, but you will gain eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Think about Jesus' example. He was never married. Never lived in a mansion. Never got to go on an airplane abroad.

Never got to go on holiday. Well, he went to the temple, and then he ran away from his parents, and there was all that stuff. Think about the American dream that you hear about, and Jesus never got to have any of it.

If anyone was due that, it was him. And he wasn't bothered about any of it. It says that he never even had a place to lay his head down. He lived almost like a homeless man, walking from place to place, serving everyone else he needs but his own.

Did Jesus miss out? No, not one bit. Jesus didn't miss out on anything. The best this world has to offer is nothing compared to the kingdom of God.

[24:34] Nothing. The inevitable end of this world is nothing. And that's not to say we can't enjoy the good things that God gives us, but we should hold on with a very loose grip, as though it's not ours to begin with.

The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. We need to be reminded that our flesh doesn't care about heaven because it's not going.

Your flesh doesn't care about the kingdom of God because your flesh is not going to enter the kingdom of God. In fact, you will only enter the kingdom of God with a new, resurrected, redeemed, and glorified body.

That's good news, but it means just now the body that you occupy doesn't care about it. So it's not going to help you. The desires of your flesh are not going to point you in that direction.

And we all have desires for glory in some way. We all want good stuff now. Our whole society has this system in place. Buy now, pay later.

[25:41] Yeah, satisfy your lusts. Satisfy your desires and passions with all this stuff now and worry about the consequences later. And we're not very good at self-control.

We're not very good at patience. We're not very good at denying ourselves. But the inevitable end of these things is that the good things that we bought now and pay for later, we lose them anyway

and we still pay later.

Warren Wiresby says, Satan promises you glory but in the end you receive suffering.

God promises you suffering but in the end that suffering is transformed into glory. Satan promises you glory now but the inevitable end of it is suffering.

That's what you receive. It's not worth selling your soul for anything the world can offer. Even if you gained the whole world you couldn't buy back your soul. You could not pay for a second chance.

[26:42] Entrust your soul to God and live your life for Christ. This business about denying ourselves it's not just about denying our lusts and passions which it is.

Denying that kind of self-indulgence but it's also about denying this self-righteousness that there's anything that we have that we can rely on before God.

We have nothing. We have no righteousness or merit to earn favour with God or salvation. And so we must deny anything within us that seeks to be self-righteous and think that it's worthy of any kind of favour with God.

Now much more could be said about this whole passage but I want to just say four quick points about verse 38. Hopefully they'll be quick but four points about verse 38.

Jesus begins teaching them that the Son of Man must suffer. It was necessary. It was sure. It was part of the plan. It was God's will. It was going to happen because of who He was.

[27:51] Then the passage ends with Jesus saying that the Son of Man will come in glory. Not if but when. He is going to come back.

It's sure. It's necessary. It is inevitable because of who He is that He is coming back in glory. It's the will of God that He comes back.

And when He does come in glory and all the world will see who He is. So as much of we have now seen that His statement about the necessary suffering came to pass it was true we can look back in history and see He did indeed suffer so too we can be sure that when He said He will come back He will come back.

He will indeed return in glory. Now the four things that I want to mention is four reasons why we should not be ashamed of Jesus. Four reasons. Number one we should not be ashamed of Him because there is nothing to be ashamed of.

There's no human being with a cleaner record than Jesus. There are no files going to be released that document any secret sins. There are no victims going to appear with claims of ill treatment or abuse from Jesus.

[29:16] Jesus was nothing but gracious and truthful just and kind full of compassion and uncompromisingly righteous. He was perfectly obedient to the letter of the law and the spirit of the law.

He himself being the embodiment of the word of God the embodiment of the righteousness of God the exact imprint of the nature of God. He is the image of the invisible God and the radiance of the glory of God.

He is the incarnation of the grace and truth of God. There has been no greater human who has ever lived on the face of this earth than Jesus Christ. His teachings and example exceed all others.

His wisdom and grace are unmatched. His compassion and kindness are unequalled. His impact and influence is immeasurable. In his short years on earth the scriptures were fulfilled.

His words gave life and power and his wondrous deeds revealed his divinity. He himself is the truest demonstration of what humans were made to be.

[30:22] Yet he himself is the incarnation of the God who made us. He is the God man. There is none like him. In him was no sin.

He is the incarnation of light and life. He was full of grace and truth. He is just and merciful. He is all powerful yet gentle and lowly.

He is full of righteousness and full of compassion. He will always confront evil and enact perfect justice yet he gave his own life to redeem us from the darkness that has overtaken us.

How could there be anything in him to be ashamed of? There is nothing. There is nothing in him to be ashamed of. How could we ever be embarrassed of such a man even if he were not our saviour?

But he is both our saviour and our God. The one through whom all things were created. We should not be ashamed of the son of man because there is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of.

[31:25] He is the absolute best of humanity. There is no greater, better, more righteous, more gracious, more just, and more courageous a human that ever lived than Jesus Christ.

And more than that, he is the one who conquered the very things that we cannot. He consistently and perfectly resisted temptation, never giving in to any indulgence or lust, never pandering to sin like we do.

He never followed the course of this world like the rest of us do. He never sinned once, not even one time. He perfectly did the will of God his Father. He never misstepped.

He never misspoke. And we need to know that it wasn't easy. It wasn't easy for him just because he was the son of God. Do you think that he overcame temptation because he was the son of God? Well, James says that God cannot be tempted. And so nothing of his divinity helped him in overcoming temptation. It was all in his humanity. He overcame it perfectly as the last Adam.

[32:29] He fought every single day of his life to live righteously, to live in obedience, despite who he was, both as the rightful heir to the throne of King David and the very son of God Most High.

He never demanded service or privilege. He gave himself to serve others and he gave his life as a ransom for many. There's nothing to be ashamed of. He is the best.

We simply cannot say enough to stress the point that there's absolutely nothing about Jesus that we could ever be ashamed of. Now, he did say this because people might be ashamed of following a person who said he was a Christ yet who was crucified.

And in our day, perhaps people might be ashamed of him because he is no longer on earth and people find it hard to imagine that he's still alive. And the people that we talk to who don't know Jesus might make us think like we're stupid because they cannot see Jesus, but we should not feel any embarrassment or shame on the account of the blindness of the world.

We shouldn't. Secondly, and don't worry, the next three are going to go quick. Secondly, we should not be ashamed of him because he was not ashamed of us.

[33:53] You know how sinful you are. You know the many things that even other people in this room could be ashamed of, never mind the perfect Son of God. If all of your sins were displayed on this screen for all of us to see, who in here would not be ashamed of you or me?

Yet Jesus, who knows the absolute worst about each one of us, still came down to earth and took on flesh so that it could be broken for our sake. Christ, the sinless one, not only died for you, but he wants you to be with him forever where he is despite knowing the worst about you.

He's not ashamed to die for you. He's not ashamed to be your Savior. Why should any of us be ashamed of him when we are the ones that he should be ashamed of?

We shouldn't be ashamed of him because he was not ashamed of us. Thirdly, we should not be ashamed of him because he's coming back in glory. Why should we be ashamed just because the world cannot presently see him?

Just because we cannot presently see him? He is coming back. It will happen. It's just a matter of time. He never lies. He always fulfills his promises and he said that he would come back.

[35:18] Not only that, he's not coming back in a lowly hidden form, but he will come back in glory and splendor such that every eye will see and every knee will bow and all shall know that he is the Lord of all.

So why should we worry about what anyone thinks about him right now when we know it's only a matter of time before he comes back in glory? It's inevitable and it's our greatest joy and hope.

Paul says in 2 Timothy 4, there is laid up a crown of righteousness which the Lord will award all who loved his appearing. Do you love his appearing? Do you long for his appearing?

We do not need to be ashamed. He's coming back in glory. And the final point, four, we should not be ashamed of him because he will be ashamed of those who are.

This is a final note of warning from Jesus. Whoever is ashamed of him and his words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

[36:26] Consider the three points we've just went through. I reckon it's therefore a very shameful thing to be ashamed of such a person as the Lord Jesus Christ.

To be ashamed of someone like Jesus, that is a shameful thing. If anyone is ashamed of him, they should be ashamed of themselves. It's a dangerous path to prefer the favor of an adulterous and sinful generation than it is to align yourself with the perfect and holy Son of God.

To prefer the favor of an adulterous and sinful generation temptation, God forbid that any of us should feel that temptation. even if we risk ridicule, the Lord will not welcome and entertain those who have lived on earth ashamed of him and his words.

Those who have looked upon Christ with shame on earth will not enjoy his favor in heaven, especially considering he came to earth and experienced ridicule and shame, ridicule and shame, and rejection and suffering and death for our sake when he should have been ashamed of us.

When he did that for us, for the world, for anyone to be ashamed of him after that. So, let us not only count the cost of following him, but let us see the great privilege and joy and utter grace that comes from the Lord Jesus towards us sinners and see that despite any suffering or loss that we might experience following him, the Lord Jesus and his kingdom is of an infinite more value than anything we could ever experience on earth.

[38:13] He is so good. We should never be ashamed of him and it's only a matter of time when he returns in glory and we go to be with him forever. How good, how glorious, how worthy of praise.

Well, we're going to sing now. Let me pray. Lord Jesus, as we gather together in your name and we open your word and we sing to your name and we approach the table of grace to see your body broken and your blood shed for us, how could we ever be ashamed of you?

We have everything in ourselves to be ashamed of and yet you gave your life to redeem us and forgive us and make us new. Let us never be ashamed of you but let us gladly and boldly sing your praises forevermore.

Amen. Let us know.