

# The Praying Christ, The Preaching Christ, The Pursuit of Christ

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Good morning and welcome to our service. It's good to be able to come together to worship God.
- So you will realise the car park is still a bit slippery. Please take care. I'm not sure it might be defrosting at the present, but it could also freeze on top of that.
- That's for the danger, so you might have some eyes under. What a sweat. But do take care. We're going to worship God now. We're going to begin our worship singing to his praise from Psalm 34.
- Psalm 34. At the beginning of the psalm. God will I bless all times. His praise my mouth shall still express.
- My soul shall boast in God. The meek shall hear with joyfulness. Extol the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord.
- [ 1 : 08 ] He heard and did me from all fears deliver. They looked to him and lightened well. Not shamed were their faces. This poor man cried.
- God heard and saved him from all his distresses. The angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasses. All those about that do him fear and them delivereth.
- O taste and see that God is good. Who trusts in him is blessed. Fear God his saints. None that in fear shall be with want oppressed.
- The lion's young may hungry be, and they may lack their food. But they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good. You can sing these verses.
- Psalm 34. From the beginning. God will I bless all times. His praise my mouth shall still express. God will I bless all times.
- [ 2 : 09 ] His praise my mouth shall still express. My soul shall bless.
- My soul shall force in God. The meek shall hear with joy.
- God bless. Amor■■■■■■ should name God. He has pésthorned by my soul. God bless you.
- May bless you. God bless you.
- Lord, he heard and did me from all fear deliver.
- [ 3 : 13 ] They looked to him out frightened with no shame and wear their faces.
- This sermon cry, God heard and saved him from all his distresses.
- The angel of the garden comes and grindeth compasses.
- All those are bright, the children we have and them give it ahead.
- O taste and see that God is good.
- [ 4 : 40 ] Who trust in him is blessed. Fear God is saved.

And that in fear shall be with one oppressed.

The lions young may hungry be.

And they may like their food. But in the truth seek the Lord.

Shall not like it be good. Let us join together in prayer.

[ 5 : 51 ] Let us pray. Lord, help us to pray. Amen. It behoves us to come with that same petition as was on the lips of the disciples in the presence of the Lord.

Lord, teach us to pray. Lord, help us to pray. And no matter how often we give the impression that we are engaged in prayer.

Whether we are simply doing so in private with no company. Or whether we are in company. Or whether we are in company with others.

Or such as is the case of the present. When our duty is to lead others in prayer. We do not believe that we are in prayer. We do not believe that we can do so without your aid.

We give thanks that we can ask for it. And that you are willing to provide it. And that you are willing to do so as another asked.

[ 7 : 07 ] Fill our mouth from on high. So that when we come. We come not simply to seek what we would believe to be appropriate.

Or in accordance with the norms of our circumstance.

But rather seeking that which is appropriate to the needs that arose of the present. We come with confession.

We come with contrition. We come with hearts that are aching because we are not as we ought to be.

We come as those who are sinners. And whose sins are too many to number. Even were we able to recognize them.

[ 8 : 15 ] And to know that they are present. There are so many that. Because of our sinfulness we fail to appreciate.

Some of our actions, our thoughts, our deeds. To be sinful. In the eyes of a holy God there are many things about us that are so wrong.

And your word directs us to understand that in thought, in word and in deed we cannot accept acknowledge our sinfulness.

We pray for your help. We pray for your help. To come with such confession. And with the appropriate sorrowing heart that should be ours even as we come in company with others.

expressing penitents as a congregation. And as a community. Recognizing that we are not deserving of the least of your mercies.

[ 9 : 27 ] Recognizing that you are the giver of every good and perfect gift. And that we have so many graces and gifts that are beyond number.

We pray for your help to acknowledge them. And to do so with heartfelt appreciation.

Recognizing even that where we are going today. In relative comfort. With the warmth of the heating.

To keep us comfortable. And we can compare ourselves to others. Who may be destitute.

Who may be on the streets of our cities and towns. Some who gather to worship in the cities and towns throughout the world.

[ 10 : 28 ] In the winter. That is far greater than their experience of it. And yet all they have is their clothing that is on their back to ensure that they are kept relatively comfortable.

There are so many things that we can rightly compare ourselves to. And yet the spirit of thankfulness is lacking.

We pray for your own help to acknowledge these things. For the food that is on our tables.

For the enjoyment that we have of many of life's pleasures and treasures. We pray that we would appreciate them.

Lest the day come when we are divested off them. Or lest the day when our thankful hearts will be held to account. For our failure to acknowledge these things that we receive from the hand of a benevolent God.

[ 11 : 40 ] We pray for your blessing upon all our homes and upon families. Upon our children, our children's children. We pray for your blessing upon every home within the community.

Those who are careless and indifferent about their souls and to neglect the provision made for them in the gospel. We would remember all to you thankful that we can bear one another's burdens.

And bring them to a throne of grace. Grant to us that spirit of prayer. That we might do that very thing that we are able to do even sitting at our hearth.

That our mind can be given free reign and call to mind the needs of those round about us. Those who are unwell. Those who are frail and elderly.

Those who are fearful of what the future may hold. Because of their own weakness or the fears and the terrors of the night that assail from time to time.

[ 12 : 42 ] We pray that you would remember us measurefully. In drawing us to yourself and uniting us as one in your hand.

We pray for your blessing upon the grieving and the sorrowful. And for that when you visit us in that way that we can remember those whose hearts are heavy.

And that we can seek the binding of the wounds. Even the wounds that you have made by your own hand. With the balm of your love.

That we would see that taking place. You remove from the scene of time those who bore witness to you. During their days in this world. So that we know some of them we know a little of.

But their number here in this world will diminish. But their number in heaven above will increase. What happens with regard to them here in this world is the tent that they dwelt in must be folded.

[ 13 : 52 ] Put to one side. And that will no corruption. But there is a place prepared for them.

Even in heavens above. A house not made with hands. The contrast is glaringly obvious. And it will be so on the experience of good people ultimately.

They will enjoy these foundations upon which their house is built that cannot be shaken.

The assurance given to them that this will be their permanent residence. And that they will share it with the many. This house of many mansions. The things. As made by the hands of our Lord and our God.

So remember us Lord unto the Gospel. Bless your world to us today. Bless those who preach it at the far ends of the earth. Remember our nation in mercy. Pour out your spirit upon us in our waywardness and in our negligence.

[ 14 : 59 ] Tell us once again to yourself. Remember our King, his family. The parliaments that are required to function in his name.

We pray your blessing upon them. Their accountability is ultimately to the King of Kings. And they will answer to you the day when you make up your jewels.

If they have harmed your people. As indeed through the laws of this land they have so done. They will answer to you.

And you have told us that any who are involved in such. Will be the most miserable of recipients of the judgment of the Most High God.

Hear our prayers on behalf of this world of ours. We think of places that we remember frequently that are embroidered in war.

[ 16 : 02 ] We think of the Ukraine and those who are in the depth of winter. Faced with lack of the necessities of life.

We pray for the elderly and the young especially. We pray that you would frustrate the hand of those who are destructive in their spirit.

That you will bring them to account as no doubt what will happen with them. But we pray that you would stay their hand here and now.

And that you would prevent them from further damage. You are able to do that. Your will will be done. And we ask that your wisdom would be seen above all.

Remember the city of St. Helier in Jersey where an explosion has occurred. Some have lost their lives and some are filled with fear.

[ 17 : 01 ] We remember other places that perhaps are not so newsworthy. Where these things are commonplace. Where nature itself is doing what your word tells us.

Groaning until the day of deliverance. There are volcanoes spewing out fire. The earth is shaking.

And the seas are billowing. And all are testament to the truth. That you have declared concerning this world.

That it is under your just displeasure. Until such time as you will create anew. And when you do create anew. There will be a new heaven and a new earth.

Wherein dwelleth righteousness. We await the day. Cleanse from sin we ask. In Jesus name. Amen. We are going to hear God's word as we have it in the Gospel of Mark.

[ 18 : 06 ] The first chapter. Read from the beginning. Gospel of Mark chapter 1.

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets. Behold I sent my messenger before thy face. Which shall prepare thy way before thee.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make his path straight. John did baptize in the wilderness. And preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

And there went out unto him all the land of Judea. The day of Jerusalem were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan. Confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair.

And with a girdle of a skin about his loins. And he did eat locusts and wild honey. And preached saying. There cometh one mightier than I after me.

[ 19 : 08 ] The lachet of his shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water. But he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee. And was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water he saw the heavens opened.

And the spirit like a dove descending upon him. And there came a voice from heaven saying. Thou art my beloved son. In whom I am well pleased.

And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan. And was with the wild beasts. And the angels ministered unto him.

Now after that John was put in prison. Jesus came into Galilee. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. And saying the time is fulfilled.

[ 20 : 06 ] And the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel. Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee. He saw. Simon and Andrew his brother.

Casting a net into the sea. For they were fishers. Jesus said unto them. Come ye after me. And I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets.

And followed him. And when he had gone a little further thence. He saw James the son of Zebedee. And John his brother. Who also were in the ship. Mending their nets.

And straight away he called them. And they left their father Zebedee in the ship. With the hired servants. And went after him. And they went into Capernaum.

And straight away. On the Sabbath day. He entered into the synagogue. And taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine. For he taught them as one that had authority. And not as the scribes.

[ 21 : 04 ] And there was in the synagogue. A man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out. Saying. Let us alone. What have we to do with thee? Thou Jesus of Nazareth. Art thou come to destroy us?

I know thee who thou art. The holy one of God. And Jesus rebuked him. Saying. Hold thy peace. And come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him.

And cried with a loud voice. He came out of him. And they were all amazed. In so much. That they questioned among themselves. Saying. What thing is this? What new doctrine is this?

For with authority. Commandeth he even the unclean spirits. And they do obey him. And immediately his fame spread abroad. Throughout all the region. Round about Galilee.

And forthwith. When they were. Come out of the synagogue. They entered into the house of Simon and Andrew. With James and John. And. But Simon's wife's mother.

[ 22 : 03 ] Lay sick of a fever. And Danon. They tell him of her. And he came and took her by the hand. And lifted her up. And immediately the fever left her. And she ministered unto them.

And at even when the sun did set. They brought unto him all that were deceased. And them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door.

And he healed many that were sick of diverse diseases. And cast out many devils. And suffered not the devils to speak. Because they knew him. And in the morning rising up.

A great while before day. He went out. And departed into a solitary place. And there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him.

Followed after him. And when they had found him. They said unto him. All men seek for thee. And he said unto them. Let us go into the next towns.

[ 23 : 00 ] That I may preach there also. For therefore. Came I forth. And he preached in their synagogues. Throughout all Galilee. And cast out devils.

And so on. May God add his blessing to this reading of his word. To his name be the praise. Please. Now boys and girls.

If you are continuing your study. Your consideration of the life of Joseph. And last week I mentioned to you.

How Joseph met with his brother. Perhaps I was going ahead of you. I know I was told I was. But one thing that's significant about that encounter.

Is how it describes to us. The forgiveness. That Joseph was able to demonstrate. Towards his brother.

[ 23 : 55 ] That's important. To be forgiving. Forgiving. Is something. That. Every one of us.

Should be able to do. And yet. The truth is. That sometimes. We're not very forgiving. We find it.

We find it. Very easy. To. To ask somebody else. To forgive us. When we do something wrong. But we don't find it as easy.

To forgive them. When they do us wrong. That's the way it is. It would be nice to think. That that. That would be something different.

But. Joseph. Is a. Story. Of. Forgiveness. It's a story. About many things.

[ 24 : 55 ] But it speaks to us. About. The ability. Of this man. To. Demonstrate. The spirit. Of forgiveness.

And he had much. To. Forgive. He was wrong. In a great many ways. And he had the ability. As we touched on. Last week. To dwell on these things.

And it's a sad thing. When you meet somebody. Who's. Bitter. Somebody who's. Embittered. Sometimes.

Life. Makes people. Bitter. They feel. Wronged. And they feel. That. Whatever. Whoever. Has wronged.

So much. Heart. They really. Can't. Get that. Out of their heads. They can't. Get it out of their hearts. And their whole life. Is spoiled by. I don't think.

[ 25 : 51 ] What it would have been like. For Joseph. If he. Just spent his days. Thinking about. All the wrongs. That were done to him.

His being. Deprived of. His home. And his family. And sold into slavery. And. Put into a prison. All of these are things.

That happened. If he started. Remembering these things. Now think about it. How many of us. Actually do that. How many of us.

Actually sit down. Sometimes. And. We let our minds. Dwell. On. How. Badly. Treated. We have been.

And if. If. We were anything. Like Joseph. We. Would. Stab these thoughts. Out. Was.

[ 26 : 47 ] Because. It. It. Can only. Create. In. Something. That's very. Poisonous. Something very. Very.

Much more. For ourselves. Really. Than it is for any. With whom we have. But these thoughts. And. Many things about Joseph. Are.

Brought to our attention. About. Jesus. And Jesus. is taught the need that there was to forgive. The need that there was to be able to be forgiven even.

You might think that's strange but sometimes we may find it in our heart to forgive somebody but we're not as sure that they are willing to forgive us. Is that not strange? We might want to be forgiven and we're perfectly willing to forgive others who wronged us but sometimes we think oh but we can't have that forgiveness for ourselves. Now that maybe you don't understand that but a lot of people are like that with regard to Jesus. Jesus is somebody who is willing to forgive, willing to show mercy and yet we sometimes look at Jesus as if he's not able to do that, that he's not willing to do that.

We'll say my sins are too great, my sins are too many, my wrongdoings or who can count them and he knows all about them, he's not willing to forgive me. But Jesus corrects us and says that that is not the way he is. Remember he has a story about a person who was in debt and he went to the person he was indebted to and he asked to be forgiven his debt and that's what happened. He received forgiveness. He received his debt cancelled out.

[ 29 : 09 ] But then somebody came to him that that was his debt and instead of showing the same forgiveness to him Jesus tells the story that he sent this man to prison. The very thing that he enjoyed he didn't allow the other person to enjoy.

So Jesus is teaching us again and again he reminds us of the need that we have to understand how precious forgiveness is.

Joseph's life tells us that. It teaches us that. And Jesus himself in his sermon on the mount, he tells us something that we find sometimes very difficult to do.

But Joseph embodies it. I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which decide rightfully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your father which is in heaven.

For he makes the son of God.

[ 30 : 47 ] Joseph demonstrated the ability to forgive even those who in their eyes did not deserve forgiveness. We suggested that last week that they were afraid that they would at some point be held to account by Joseph.

But Joseph had the spirit of Christ even though he lived in the earth long before Christ. I hope you remember that today. We're going to sing now as you go out to Sunday school from Psalm 107.

Psalm 107. Verse 8. We're going to sing.

We're going to sing. We're going to sing.

Verse 8 through to 14. Oh, that men to the Lord would give praise for his goodness then. Oh, that men to the Lord would give praise for his goodness then.

[ 32 : 11 ] And from his words of wonder, And to the sense of pain.

For he the soul that knowing is, Doth fully satisfy.

With goodness he the hungry soul does fill upon completely.

Such as shut up in darkness deep, And in death's shade abide, Whom strongly have affliction bound, And died on spasms have died, Because against the words of God, They wrought rebelliously, And they the kind shall do condemn,

Of them at its most high. Their grief hurt he did bring down, With grief they fail no help to die, In trouble and decline, To God he led them from straight to save.

[ 35 : 01 ] He out of darkness did them bring, And from death's shade empty, These bands wherewith they had been bound, As thunder quite he breathed.

And from death's shade empty, And from death's shade buried. I'm going to turn to the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 1. We can read again at verse 35.

Mark, chapter 1, at verse 35. And in the morning rising up, A great while before day, He went out, That is Jesus went out, And departed into a solitary place, And there prayed.

And Simon and they that were with him, Followed after him. And when they had found him, They said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, That I may preach there also.

For therefore came I forth, And he preached in their synagogues Through the Old Galilee, And cast out devils. And so on.

[ 36 : 40 ] The Gospel of Mark begins with the description of the ministry of John the Baptist. And it is a ministry that says, Was described by the prophets.

The prophet Malachi and the prophet Isaiah, Described to us, The kind of ministry, That was to be carried out by the forerunner of Christ.

And John the Baptist was that forerunner. And he introduces Jesus to the people. And in the account that Mark gives, We find Jesus going out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

And there again, We are told something that was true of Jesus. Jesus came into Galilee, Preaching the Gospel.

Sometimes, We don't really imagine him. We know that he did certain things. And that these things were part and partial of his everyday life.

[ 38 : 01 ] But we may not be as aware of the centrality of preaching to the life of Jesus.

If you ask the question, What was it that Jesus came into the world to do? And you are quite right of you. Go to the cross. He came to the cross to give his life, A soul, A ransom for many.

That was what we believe the Bible tells us about Jesus. That that's what he was born to do. One of these glib sayings that we associate with this time of year.

Jesus is the reason for the season. And they point you to the cross. And the cross is fundamental to the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Everything that he did moved him towards that time. But we cannot ignore the fact that Jesus was a preacher of the Gospel.

[ 39 : 12 ] Here in this chapter we have a description of the call of disciples. They were called to do what?

To follow him? To learn from him? But their instruction was that they too might preach the Gospel.

That they too would tell others about Christ.

It's also interesting if you notice here, You're probably familiar enough with what is said.

And you understand that Jesus preached. He also carried out many miracles. And many of these miracles were the miracles of healing.

[ 40 : 14 ] And you may subconsciously be content to accept the fact that these were the things that he did regularly.

That he healed broken limbs. He healed bodies that were riven with all kinds of disease.

But it also tells us, I think in this passage that we read more than once, That Jesus cast out devils. And you say, well, where does that feature in our society?

We don't believe that there are such a thing as evil spirits. We're much more advanced than that. In the context of Jesus' ministry, The casting out of devils is something he did regularly.

In our society, in our culture, we don't think of it very often as something that takes place. I know that there are some, even within Western society, that there are some who are engaged in practices where they see it as their role to cast out devils.

[ 41 : 37 ] But very often, I think they themselves are under the control of devils because their activities are not God-honoring in any sense of the word.

But we would be wrong to think that only part of what Jesus is saying is true. We would be wrong in imagining that only part of what was going on is relevant to our society.



We need to be mindful of the culture that Jesus was born into, into which he ministered. The people to which he preached the gospel are no different to our people.

To you and to me, we have the same needs, the same pressing requirements. And some of them we are not really conscious of.

But my focus today, and I hope your focus today, will be on what it says to us here about Jesus the Passion. Two things that are said about him, and one thing that are said about others with regard to him.

[ 42 : 48 ] First thing is that Jesus prayed. Jesus prayed. The second thing that Jesus preached.

And the third thing that there were those who pursued Jesus. Jesus prayed. Just for the sake of alliteration.

Just for the sake of alliteration. You've got three Ps there, just to help you remember. Jesus praying. Jesus preaching. And men and women pursuing Jesus.

Now we don't, I suppose, often think of Jesus as somebody whose life was devoted to prayer.

Because in many respects he is so different to ourselves. And you may question, well, how can we compare ourselves to Jesus?

[ 43 : 48 ] Because Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. Jesus is God. He is the second person in the Trinity. And as the second person in the Trinity, where does prayer come into his life?

But I think the emphasis on prayer tells us the need that we have to remember that when he was born into this world, his humanity is a humanity that is surrounded with weakness.

The weakness that marks out our humanness. He is man and yet he is without sin.

But although he is without sin, he lives in a world of sin. And because he lives in a world of sin, without sin in his own heart or in his own life, he still has to resist it.

He has to contend with it. He has to encounter it in the lives of others. So, for that reason, prayer is something that is central to the life of Jesus.

[ 45 : 04 ] We know, for example, there are many prayers of Jesus that are recorded for us. The best known is John 17, the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus. It's a remarkable prayer.

The Son of God speaking to his Heavenly Father and there describing to us the role that he has as somebody who is advocate, who is intercessor, who is the great high priest.

He is the person who is standing between God and his people, acting on their behalf in a very distinct way. There are other times when perhaps because of the uniqueness of that prayer, we might not find any connection between ourselves and Jesus and his prayer life.

But I think when we think about the kind of occasions where we see Jesus pray, not privately, but with others, that he is describing to us the reality of why prayer is all good.

Do you remember, just to give you a couple of illustrations, when Jesus was taken up to the Mount of Transfiguration, he was there with a couple of disciples, but he was involved in prayer at that occasion.

[ 46 : 38 ] Read it for yourself. His face was lifted to the heavens. He engaged in prayer with God. When he was with God. When he was choosing his disciples. The first thing he did was he went apart.

He set himself away from the rest of his followers in order to pray. And there are many occasions where we are not allowed to hear what he was praying for.

Like this occasion here. Like this occasion here. What we are told is that at this point, that Jesus, before it was daylight, he went out even in the night to pray.

And I think it reminds us of how important prayer was to him.

Why was it important to him? Why would prayer be important to any one of us? What are the things that mark out the occasions for prayer?

[ 47 : 57 ] Even if you don't know what was in the prayer of Jesus. You remember, he taught them to pray. He taught them what to pray for. He instructed them by praying with them and for them and allowing them to be in his passion.

But his prayer life was not simply a ministry in itself designed to teach others how they should pray.

But it was necessary for him to fulfill his ministry. To allow him to do the things that he wanted to do. And the things that would be strenuously resisted when he tried to do them.

For him, whatever task he was about to engage in, he understood the need that there was for prayer.

Can I imagine that? Here we have somebody and you'll readily acknowledge that he is a significant person. That he has a significant relationship with his heavenly father.

[ 49 : 06 ] He has his ear always. God spoke to Jesus. Remember, when he came out of the wilderness, he spoke to him and said to him personally, This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

You could say he had a direct line to the throne room of heaven. But that was not enough for Jesus to engage in the work that the father had given to him without resorting to prayer.

And doing so regularly. And doing so realizing that everything that he did, he needed to unburden himself before God and to seek God's help.

Not exactly that. He needed to be God's help for it. Somebody said, I can't remember who. That the person who makes the mistake of saying too busy to pray. They've got it wrong. that the person who makes the mistake of saying, too busy to pray, they've got it wrong.

What is really true is, too busy not to pray. And there was nobody as busy as the Lord Jesus.

[ 50 : 27 ] And his business was his father's business. And because of the nature of his business, he came to God regularly in order to pray in his presence.

Here, even before his disciples were awake. The Apostle Paul learned from Jesus in everything he says, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

Now you may think that today I am speaking exclusively to the Christian because you believe the Christian to be somebody who prays.

And I hope I'm speaking to the Christian. I hope I'm telling the Christian of the centrality of prayer in the life of the Christian.

Whoever the Christian is, whether it is me as the minister, or you as a novice bearer, or a member of the congregation, your life, my life, should always be a life that contains within it prayer.

[ 51 : 48 ] Regularly, repeatedly, be sorted with God seeking his face at the throne of grace. But don't think that it is exclusively the remit of the Christian because every person has got something that they want to do.

And if you want to do it well, don't think that you can't pray. Pray about it. Pray to God about it. Go down on your knees in private and bring your cares and concerns to God and God will hear and God will listen and God will provide an answer.

Maybe not the one. I always have to say that because we in our foolishness already know in our mind's eye when we come with our list to God, this is the list.

This is how God will stroke up everything that's on my list. But he may have different ways of answering your prayer.

Not necessarily the ones or the ways that you expect him to do that. But it is open to everyone. And it should be the thing that everyone resorts to.

[ 53 : 11 ] Because when you read about the things that Jesus encountered in his ministry, this is the world in which he lived.

These things that you meet day to day are the things that he met day to day. He met the problems that are rampant in society.

He met an authority that couldn't care less about the needs of the people at times that were oppressive, that were resistant to spiritual things.

He dealt with the people who were downtrodden, who were neglected, who were forgotten. Some people who had lives that were in turmoil. Some people who had to deal with physical illness, mental illness, who had broken relationships.

All of these things were true about his time. And they are true about our time. And always remember that just as surely as he ministered to those who were needing miracles to take place, he also had to contend with the powers of darkness that was at work in this world as it still is.

[ 54 : 35 ] Where was the devil when sin entered into the world?

Do you know? Where was he? Do you know the story of Genesis? Do you know the story of the fall? Did you see the devil come into the Garden of Eden with his banners flying?

With his drums beating? Do you see him at work? Saying, here I am. This is me. I'm here to do my desperate work.

I didn't do that. He came as a serpent into the garden. He came secretly.

He came deceiving the woman that was the wife of Adam. Surreptitiously, secretly, doing his work without people knowing he was there.

[ 55 : 46 ] Don't imagine for one minute that's the way he operates always. But where the gospel is, that's the way he works generally. One of the commentators I was reading about, he was talking about a missionary that he knew that worked in Africa.

And he says, when you belong to the West, you're not really as exposed to the powers of darkness that are fully engaged in society.

And blatantly so, as they are in some of the third world countries. And this missionary made the fatal mistake of taking on a witch doctor head on.

And he said, I have the power of God. And I have the gospel of God. And I know how to defeat you.

So he went into the theater of darkness. And he took the drum of a witch doctor. And he told the witch doctor that this drum was going to be used by him for the collection when he went back to the church that he belonged to.

[ 57 : 01 ] He was going to prove to the witch doctor whose power was greater. But the witch doctor didn't listen to him.

And before his own congregation of believers, which is what they are, they're in bondage to the powers of darkness, he said, I am going to curse this man.

And he duly did. He cursed him in the face of his people. And before long, this man, who was a Christian believer, but who did not deal responsibly with the power that he was dealing with, he found himself, whether it was by the power of suggestion or whatever, he succumbed to disease and died quite soon after, shortly after returning home.

The drum disappeared. The powers of darkness, we don't understand them, but don't dismiss them. Jesus didn't. Jesus didn't.

His prayer to God was often in resistance to the powers that were allied against him in the world. All you have to do is go to the dark night of his experience in the Garden of Gethsemane.

[ 58 : 34 ] He was wrestling with God. He was wrestling with God. But it was the point at which the most active agents of the spirit world were allied against him.

And the darkness that was there was not just the darkness of the night. Believe that, because that is part of the thing that needs to be remembered, that we, Paul says, do not wrestle with flesh and blood.

There's a whole host of armies arrayed against the Christian believer and against anyone who wants to be a Christian.

Against anyone who wants to be a Christian. If you don't believe that, you are a fool. I don't mind saying it. I didn't intend to spend any time on that.

But Jesus prayed and he had much reason to pray. Most of all, because of the pressures that he was under going out, combating, encountering, ministering to all the needs that were before him.

[ 59 : 57 ] But then he preached. And he preached and he preached and there were many, many things that he preached about. You know, we mentioned verse 14.

The energy that he needed for preaching, don't you underestimate it. Don't you underestimate the need that he had because daily he was surrounded by the needs of the people.

The desperate people who heard that he healed came to him. They pleaded for his mercy. They cried out for their souls at times.

But most often because of the brokenness of their humanity. And he turned no one away. But most especially in the region of Galilee here, he was preaching the gospel.

Look at verse 21. Where he did, they went into Capernaum and straight away on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. They were astonished at this doctrine for he taught them as one that had authority.

[ 61 : 15 ] They were all amazed that they questioned among themselves saying, what thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits and they do obey him.

Jesus was engaged in, I pray probably, I wouldn't, I think this is probably the thing that he enjoyed doing most.

When joy is right, the right word to use. Nothing more that he preferred to preaching the good news of salvation through a redeemer to a sin-sick world.

Telling him about himself, telling him about God's purpose of salvation to sinners, telling people who were crying out of the emptiness of their life to be filled with something other than this world had to provide to them.

Because this world with all its provisions just needed to be filled again with the same vacuous emptiness that could not satisfy.

[ 62 : 30 ] They needed to respond to what he had to say. This was, you know, this was how he was differentiated between, you know, the scribes, we're told the scribes, they, well, if we simplify what they did, their role was to write down, they didn't have computers, they didn't have typewriters, they had to write down verbatim the words of the scripture, painstakingly writing down the letters that were in Hebrew, every chock and tittle, every line, every mark that differentiated the word from another word.

And they were gifted men. but their work changed over the years, so that the scribes also came to be the person who spoke the words of the commentators, those who had something to say about what was written.

but all they had to say was what somebody else had to say before them. They would quote that person, and that person was quoting another person, and that person was quoting another person, and so on at infinitum.

And you can understand how empty that was to the people. If somebody got up on a large day, on a Sabbath day, and they said, Rabbi Ben Gurion says this, and Rabbi so-and-so said that, and Rabbi somebody else said this.

That's all they had to say. But Jesus, when they came, when he came to them, he spoke to them about God, about his word, what his word meant, what his word intended to say, what their needs were in light of what that word was saying, how that word meant something.

[ 64 : 40 ] That's the rule of the preacher. that's the rule of the preacher. I like to quote the authorities, I like to quote what better men than I myself have said, but if that's all I have, it becomes very empty, I suppose it becomes like something that is really somebody else's experience.

I remember before I was converted coming to hear the preaching for the first time, I was hearing it and saying for the first time, I had many times sat under the gospel, but I'd never heard it.

And when this minister came and he started preaching the gospel, he annoyed me, he angered me, he made me feel sorry, he made me feel grief, he made me feel penitent.

Not all at the same time, but the word was from this person's mouth directed to my heart and I understood the difference.

For whatever reason, I know God was in it and I know God was at work. And when Jesus preached the word, he preached it to people who needed to hear the word, who needed to act on what the word was saying, and he needed to believe that Jesus meant for their souls to be cured, for their life to be changed.

[ 66 : 19 ] He understood more better than anyone that the word, the gospel, must be preached. You believe that, you remember that whatever it is that you're tempted to think concerning what happens in this building on a Lord's Day, don't neglect to believe the preaching of the gospel is central to it.

Whatever needs to happen in accompaniment to the preaching of the gospel, the preaching of the gospel has to be central.

The gospel, Jeffrey Gorgon, one of the commentators, I'm not dismissing the commentator, he says the following, we must grasp that Christianity Thessalonians of theanite saying