

The most important person in the world

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[0:00] Let's draw you back together. Anyone want to shout out who they were saying? Samuel? Who? Trump. Donald Trump. Isaac? Who? McNeil. Don't know who that is. He plays for Everton, does he? Okay. An Everton football player.

Wonderful. Bethany? Jesus. I think you might be onto something there. Otis? Jude Bellingham. England football player. Excellent. Some interesting ideas. These are the people I thought of on the football theme. Gareth Southgate. England manager. Will he guide us to glorious victory in the Euros? He's probably pretty important to some people right now.

These two guys, Rishi and Keir, I guess we're seeing them a lot at the moment. It feels like they might be pretty important at the moment. Anyone know who this is?

Elon Musk. Elon Musk? Yeah? Like one of the richest people in the world. He owns a lot of things. Maybe he's the most important person in the world.

Why do I ask this question? Well, at the end of last week, Peter said to the crowd that he was speaking to, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

[1:47] And we were thinking that everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved. Why on earth does Peter need to stand up and tell people that?

Because everyone on earth needs to be saved. Everyone on earth has turned away from God. They've said no to God.

I'm in charge. Not you. Everyone in the world has said that. And because we've said that, we face God's judgment on our sin forever.

But the good news is that Peter declares everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And so I think the most important person in the world right now is Jesus.

And Acts chapter 2, 22 to 41, it's all about Jesus. Because only Jesus can forgive us our sin.

[2:57] Only Jesus can offer us hope for the future that will last beyond our lives here on earth.

Only Jesus can do that. And we're going to see five things about Jesus from this passage now.

Then we'll sing a song and then we'll think, what do we do about all this?

So, five things. Again, turn to the people around you and just chat for a moment. What miracles of Jesus can you think of? Another minute to chat.

Thank you.

Let me draw you back together. Great to hear lots of chat going on about this. It doesn't have to be children that answer. Adults can answer T.

[4:16] But Otis, you were the first with your hand up. Feeding the 5,000. Wow. Yeah, Jesus did that with a boys' pat lunch. Gracie. He did.

He made water into wine. Fantastic. Corinne, you had your hand up. Oh, you had Gracie's answer T. Anyone else got something?

Daniel. Resurrecting the dead. Yeah. We can think of Lazarus. He rose from the dead. Yeah. The son of the widow of Nain. The son of the widow of Nain.

Yeah. He rose him from the dead as well. Yeah. Fantastic. Bethany. He drove away demons. He drove away demons. Isaac. He got the cool and blind eyes.

Yeah. Yeah. And he opened them looking for people who were not alone. Lame. Lame, yeah.

Fantastic. Last one from Gracie, I think.

[5:15] He walked on water. He walked on water. Fantastic. Lots of amazing things Jesus did. Wow.

I can't walk on water. Jesus can. Jesus took those few loaves and fishes from that boy's packed lunch and fed thousands. Jesus is amazing.

And so people flocked to come and see Jesus, didn't they? The sick came to be healed by him. So many people followed Jesus because of how amazing he was.

And maybe in the crowd that Peter is speaking to, maybe some of them thought, oh yeah, I was there. I was fed by some of that bread and fish that Jesus distributed to us.

This is Jesus. Peter tells us that Jesus of Nazareth was a man. Jesus was a man. He was a human being.

[6:19] Like we are. But no ordinary human being can do these. For these miracles, in these miracles, God was saying this.

He was accredited to you by God, to you by miracles, wonders and signs. In these miracles, God was saying, look, look, this Jesus is no ordinary human being.

He is God. He is my son. So what do you do with someone like Jesus? Well, the religious authorities saw Jesus as a threat.

All these things he was doing and all these people who were gathering around him, they didn't like that. And they wanted to get rid of him. And so Jesus was handed over to them.

Peter tells us this. This man, verse 23, was handed over to you. He was handed over to the authorities. And people turned on him, didn't they?

[7:26] They shouted, crucify him, crucify him. And maybe those people that thought, oh yeah, I was there when I was fed by the loaves and fishes.

Maybe they also thought, I was there when I shouted with the crowd, crucify him, crucify him. You see, Jesus was a great miracle worker.

He was God. But he also died. Peter says this very, very clearly to the people.

Verse 23. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

You put him to death along with the wicked authorities who stood against him. Jesus, who did so much, so much good, who came to seek and save the lost.

[8:35] You put him to death. And maybe if we were there ourselves, maybe we would have shouted, crucify him too. We sang in that song earlier, it was my sin.

It was our sin that held him there on the cross. But also, know that this was no accident.

This was no accident. Let me read verse 23 to you again. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

This was no accident, Jesus, going to the cross. Now, very often, I find myself playing board games. And last Saturday, Becky and I were playing this game.

Settlers of Catan was some friends of ours. And they hadn't played it before. And I thought, maybe this is a chance for me to win this game at last. And so I had a plan in my head, very clear plan of how I might win.

[9:50] But I wasn't able to. In fact, very quickly, I realized I was not doing well. And I seemed like I was losing, because I was losing.

My plan was not working at all. And you know what? When Jesus went to die on the cross, maybe it seemed to people like God's plan was failing.

You see, God had a plan to save the world. Peter said, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But what kind of a plan is this?

Jesus dying the death of a criminal on a cross. Surely God's plan has gone wrong. The cross and Jesus dying on it may seem weak and powerless.

It may seem like God's plan to save the world had failed. But actually, on the cross, what we are seeing is God's deliberate plan.

[11:00] We are seeing God, our strong and mighty Savior, dying for our sin. Dying in our place. It was our sin that held him there.

And we see that God's plan really wasn't failing. Because we see also in this chapter that Jesus rose.

Have a look at verse 24. God's plan wasn't failing. God raised him from the dead. Freeing him from the agony of death. Because it was impossible for death to keep his hold on him.

God's plan to save the world was not failing. It was winning. God's plan to save the world was working. You see, it was impossible for death to keep Jesus down.

Now, I've got a pool of water here. To try and help us to understand this a little bit more. And I've got some objects in this bag. Now, there are three objects that I will let people put in.

[12:08] But because this is water and there is electrics, there's a couple of others that I will do myself. But we can watch and we will see. And what we're going to do with this water, hands down for the moment, what we're going to do with this water is we're going to see with these objects, are they going to sink or are they going to float?

Now, apologies, you can't really see through. I tried using another box. Turns out it had a hole in it. So, we've got this one. Anyway, who would like to come forward?

Let's start with Isaac. Let's start with you. Isaac, here's a round bit of playdough, yellow playdough. Do you want to hold that up for people?

Now, do we think this is going to sink or float? Float. There's quite a lot of sinks. There's the odd float going around.

Isaac, do you want to drop it in and see? And can you tell us, has that sunk or float? If you're younger and want to see, come and see. Then do come up, actually. What's happened to it?

[13:18] It's sunk. It's not floating. It's sunk. Who would like to do the next one? Otis, do you want to come and do this one?

What's this? It's a lollipop. Hold that up so everyone can see it. Do we think that's going to sink or float? Float. Several sinks.

Some floats over this way. What do you reckon, Otis? No. You think it's going to float? Drop it in and see. That has gone straight to the bottom.

Excellent. There's one more that I can have some help with. Any children who haven't put their hands up? Okay.

Gracie, come on. 20p. Do you want to hold that up for everybody? Do you think that will sink or float? Sink. Sink. There's a big support for sinking here.

[14:18] Gracie, do you want to see what happens? And it's sunk. Yes. Yes. Cool. Okay. This one, I'm going to do this one because of water and electrics and things.

It's a stone. Sink. Sink. We've got several sinks here. Okay. Sink. That has fallen to the bottom. You might have heard it. It fell in. Final one. Again, I'll do this one. Football. Is that going to float or sink?

Float. We've got quite a few floats. Phil says float. He's a big fan of floating. Floating. Yay.

Yay. Those other things sunk. What's the point of this? Those other things sunk. This football floats. And you know what?

[15:17] I was trying this earlier. I was trying to force it down. But it doesn't. It comes back up. It's impossible to keep that football down.

Just like it's impossible to keep Jesus down in the grave. Jesus did die. He really did die.

He really did breathe his last breath. But he also really rose again. You can't keep that football down. You can't keep Jesus down. Jesus rose again.

He was nailed to the cross. He breathed his last breath. He rose again. Peter goes on. And reads us some more verses from the Old Testament.

Verse 25. I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand. I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad.

[16:13] And my tongue rejoices. My body also will rest in hope. Because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead. You will not let your Holy One see decay.

You have made known to me the paths of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence. Did anyone spot who wrote those words? David wrote them.

And is David alive? David's body died. Even though David wrote, You will not let your Holy One see decay.

See, this is not words about David. This is words about Jesus. Who it's impossible to keep down. Verse 31.

Seeing what was to come, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah. That he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead. Nor did his body see decay.

[17:16] I should have read verse 30. I'm going to read that actually. But he was a prophet. David was a prophet. And knew that God had promised him on earth that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

David spoke years and years before Jesus ever came. And told him, There was going to be one coming. Who had said on your throne forever. That's the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he will not see death. Yes. It's impossible for him to die. And so everyone who calls on the name of Jesus, the one who died and rose again, they will be saved.

And they too will know life forever with God. Because Jesus has conquered the grave for us. Jesus is our great, mighty savior.

Two more things about Jesus. Number four, he sat down. Now when you get home from school or from work, I wonder if one of the first things you do is sit down.

[18:28] Ah, job finished for the day. Well, when Jesus did his job on earth of dying and rising again, Jesus sat down.

Verse 33. Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God. And he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

For David did not ascend to heaven. And yet he said, said of Jesus who did ascend to heaven, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Jesus is now sat down in heaven. His work of salvation is done. There's another verse in the book of Hebrews which says, when he had offered once for all time, one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

Jesus' work for salvation for the world is finished so that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But there's a bit more we need to see.

[19:45] Chapter 1, verse 8. It's a key verse in the book of Acts. Jesus says this. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

See, Jesus has done the work of salvation for us, but now that needs to be preached to the world. And this verse always makes me think of Buzz Lightyear.

Buzz Lightyear famously says, to infinity and beyond. That's his catchphrase. Jesus says, to Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria and beyond, to the ends of the earth.

That the message of the gospel has got to go out to the ends of the earth. The message that death cannot hold Jesus down. Because we preach to the ends of the earth so more people can call on the name of the Lord and be saved.

And that's a big job. But Jesus has not left us alone. See, final thing we see about Jesus here is that he's given us his spirit.

[21:03] Verse 33. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

The spirit came upon God's people. In Acts 2, we saw that lots last week. Jesus has given us all that we need to do his job of telling the world that if you call on the name of the Lord, you will be saved.

Now we're going to think a bit more about this passage in a moment. But first we're going to sing. We're going to sing again. But words will never hurt me.

I was told that a lot when I was younger. I'm not sure it's true. Sticks and stones, absolutely. They might break my bones.

But words will hurt me. They might not hurt my body physically. They're hurting here. If people say unkind things to me.

[22:06] After Peter's said, preached this amazing sermon, verse 37 says this, when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart.

It hurt them inside. They were cut to the heart. Peter said to them, you helped to put Jesus to death. That hurt. And so they asked this, brothers, what shall we do? What shall we do?

That's the question. Well, Peter says a few things. And he says, first of all, repent. Verse 38, Peter replied, repent.

Repent. What does repent mean? It means to completely change our mind. Or our purpose.

[23:14] You see, it's like we human beings, it's like we're going for a walk. And we're going that way. And that's the way all of us are going when we're born.

And that way, well, what's that way about? We've got to use our imagination slightly. But walking that way is, I can choose whatever I want to do.

And in that, some of what I will choose will be good things. I might help people when they're in need of help.

I might give to charity. I might say please and thank you. But also, going that way, I might choose to do something wrong.

And that's okay in my mind. I want to say a lie. And so I'm just going to say it. And it's okay. Or I want to hit someone. And that's okay.

[24:14] Because I want to do it. It's like all human beings are going that way until we hear about Jesus. And some people, when they hear about Jesus, when they hear that Jesus has come into the world and he's done these amazing miracles, and that he went to the cross and died, that puzzles people.

And then they hear that Jesus rose again. And then they hear that they did that for us, for me, because I'm walking this way, because I'm walking this way, which is saying, I'm going to do whatever I want to do.

I'm going to say no to following God. But then we hear about Jesus and we hear that he's done all that to save us. And some people walking that way will think, oh, wow, that's amazing.

What do I do then? Well, I repent. I say sorry to God. I completely turn around and I start walking this way. And this way is me saying, I'm going to live for you, Jesus.

When I want to do those wrong things, I'm going to ask for your help to not do them. And when I do do them, I'm going to say sorry to you, because that's wrong.

[25:47] It's like we completely change around, turn direction, have a new purpose for living, have a new person to live for. And it's great, because Jesus gives us life, life to the full.

He gives us life that will last forever, because it's impossible to keep Jesus down. So Peter says, repent. He then says, be baptized.

Now some of us, a few weeks ago, we saw, didn't we, two baptisms, Isabel and Richard were baptized. And it was so special to see that happening right there under where Phil is sitting this morning.

And it happened. They got dunked in water to show the new life that they have in Jesus. Their old life, their sins, that has been forgiven.

And now they've risen up, out of the water, into the new life that Jesus gives. And Peter says, what shall we do? Be baptized.

[26:56] Not because we have to do that to be saved. Think of the thief on the cross who repents at the last moment. He didn't have time to be baptized. But we do that because Jesus has told us to.

It's the normal thing to do once we become a Christian to follow Jesus by saying, I'm going to be baptized. I'm going to show that I'm one of his people.

And if you're a Christian today and you haven't been baptized yet, do ask us about that. We'd love to have that chat with you. Baptism is a bit like putting on an England t-shirt.

Sorry, lots of football references. The Euros are coming. So bear with us. It's a bit like putting it on an England t-shirt. Those that will put on an England t-shirt next Sunday in our first match, they are saying, this is my team.

This is the team that I am playing for. This is the country I am going to represent, that I belong to, and I'm going to play for. And when we're baptized, it's saying, this is who I am now.

[28:14] I'm living for Team Jesus. I want to be known as one of his followers. And all of this, Peter says, let's be done in the name of Jesus.

Peter replied, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Because only Jesus can save us.

Only Jesus could die for our sins. Only Jesus could be raised from death to life, conquering the grave.

It's impossible to keep Jesus down. Only Jesus can save us. He is our only hope in life and death. And when you repent, when you start following Jesus, you have the Spirit in you, helping you to live out your new life in him, for him.

[29:23] It's all about Jesus. And Peter goes on to say in this verse, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit we've said that, the promise is for you and your children and all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call.

Peter is saying again, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The Lord our God is calling people from all over the world, Jewish people and Gentile people, all nations, to come to him.

Whatever background you have come from, whatever you have done, you can come and be saved by the Lord Jesus.

It doesn't matter who you are, you can call on him to be saved. And all of them, who were saved on that day, were told in verse 31 this, those who accepted his message were baptized.

About 3,000, that's so many, were saved. And they were added to their number that day. By added to their number, it means they start to belong to a church.

[30:46] The church is massive. It's grown by 3,000 in one day. But that's the normal thing for Christian people to do. When someone's repented and been baptized, they're added to the church.

And we'll think about the church next week. That's why church membership is a good idea. That's why it's great to see Q and Ha-He and Debbie and Bill come into membership this morning.

And so if you want to talk about church membership, if you're a Christian, he says, this is my church. Again, do speak to one of the elders here this morning.

I would love to have that chat with you. But for now, who's the most important person in the world? Well, it's got to be Jesus. Only Jesus can save people from their sins.

Only Jesus could rise from the dead. It's impossible for death to keep him down. It's only Jesus who people can call on to be saved.

[31:54] This passage is all about him. If you get asked later today or tomorrow, what would you do at church? We'll say, we looked at a passage and it was all about Jesus.

Isn't it always all about Jesus? Well, yes it is. Because salvation is found in nobody else but Jesus. This is the one that we need to be pointing people to.

At the moment, lots of people might be talking about politics, putting their hope in a new government or about football, putting their hope in the England team. But the only one who can give us hope forever is Jesus.

And maybe this morning you're here and you've sort of been hearing about Jesus, maybe even for the first time. And you're wondering about following him.

Actually, maybe you are feeling cut to the heart. You're aware again of the wrong things that you've done. Even this morning, you can call on Jesus and say, please save me and please help me to follow you.

[33:10] This is Jesus. It's all about him. And we're going to sing of him now in our final hymn, which again is all about Jesus.

What is our hope in life and death? Well, it's Jesus. Christ alone. Christ alone. What is our only confidence that our souls to Jesus belong?

And so we're going to sing this out loud for the glory.