

is Jesus Really God?

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: 29 October 2023

Preacher: Rev. Andrew Ong

[0 : 00] We hope that you enjoy this teaching from Christ Church. This material is copyrighted and no unauthorized duplication, redistribution, or any other use of any part is permitted without prior consent from Christ Church.

Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristChurchEastBay.org. Old Testament reading, a reading from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah 52, 13. Behold, my servant shall act wisely. He shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted. Isaiah 53, 3-9.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised.

And we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

[1 : 10] But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

And with his wounds we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and he was afflicted. Yet he opened not his mouth. Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent.

So he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

And they made him his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth.

[2 : 17] Isaiah 53, 12. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors.

Yet he bore the sin of many and makes intercession for the transgressors. New Testament readings. A reading from the Epistle to the Philippians. Philippians chapter 2, verses 3 through 11. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[3 : 56] A reading from the first epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 1, verses 18 to 29. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart. Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise, according to worldly standards, and not many of you were powerful.

[5 : 18] Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

This is the word of the Lord. Praise to God. Is that you? Oh. Do we know what that buzz is, Scott? Oh, there we go. Thank you. Well, thanks for that reading, Melissa, that long reading. That's my fault. I kept adding verses this week because I had so many ideas, so many things I wanted to say. Welcome to Christ Church, everyone.

My name is Andrew, one of the pastors here. And I ask that you'd pray with me as we get into God's word. Father, I pray that you would simply open our eyes and lift up our eyes to the crucified and risen Christ, who is your son, who is God.

[6 : 26] And would we behold you, Father, Son, and Spirit, as the wonderful God that you are, for whom there is no one like you.

So would you be honored, Lord God, in the preaching of your word, and would we behold Christ. In his name we pray. Amen. Amen. All right, so we're in week six of our seven-week series, right?

Exploring God. And today we're addressing the question, is Jesus really God? And, you know, this is, I think, really where the rubber meets the road in our series. Because if Jesus is not God, then we can just view him maybe perhaps as some kind of legendary hero of Christianity, someone whose legend has left a mark on the world, but also someone we can't really know the truth about, right?

Or maybe we could accept him as a wise, rabbinical lecturer and teacher, someone with some pretty good ethical teachings that we can, you know, for the most part, add to the best of human conventional wisdom.

Or maybe we can reject him as a liar or as a lunatic, someone who claimed to be God, someone who said, eat my flesh and drink my blood. If Jesus isn't God, these are our options.

[7 : 32] He's either a legend, he's either a lecturer, or he's a liar, or he's a lunatic. But really, if he's any of these, there's nothing too compelling about him. There's nothing life-changing about him.

But if Jesus really is God, then he isn't just a legend. He's not just a lecturer. He's neither a liar nor a lunatic. He's Lord, all right? If Jesus is God, he's Lord.

Our maker, our sustainer, our only hope and comfort in life and death. And he's the only one who can save us. He's the only one who can save this broken world. If Jesus really is God, then that means we were made for him and for his purposes, and that we owe our entire lives to him and our exclusive devotion.

So whether you believe that Jesus is God or not, this could have major life-changing implications. But now, why consider it at all? Why are we even talking about this? Why aren't we considering whether or not Steph Curry is God, right?

Why Jesus? Well, we're not asking this like in a historical vacuum, right? No one can deny that Jesus and his followers have birthed, you know, the largest world religion in history. Even today, there are 2.8 billion Christians in this world.

[8 : 39] Our world population's 8 billion, all right? 2.8 billion people in this world right now who believe that Jesus is God. And more important than the numbers is the impact that belief in Jesus' divinity has had on the modern world, even the secular modern world.

But now, how do we tackle this question, though? Is Jesus really God? How do you prove or disprove that something or someone is God or not? And like what God or what kind of God are we even talking about?

How do you define the divine? There are multiple complexities, right, to this question, multiple rabbit trails that we could pursue. Should we try to define God first? Maybe get some consensus on a basic, universal, lowest common denominator definition of God and then see if Jesus measures up to that?

Or can we maybe get philosophical and talk epistemology? What's our method for knowing for sure that Jesus is God with any degree of certainty? Or maybe you're here today and you're not even sure if you can believe in God and, you know, you maybe would like me to rehash a sermon I preached a couple weeks ago.

You know, is there a God? We could go down all these different rabbit trails and unfortunately we can't do that in the next 20, 25 minutes, right? But what I think will be most fruitful is addressing this question by paying attention to the person of Jesus himself.

[9 : 57] See, because, you know, I get it. If you have trouble believing in God, and honestly, you might be right to not believe in that God that you have in your head.

We Christians might even agree with you that that God doesn't exist either. But what I've found is that when people gaze upon and behold the man Jesus, right, Jesus of Nazareth, who claimed to be God, whose tomb was empty, who sparked a movement that altered the world more than any other movement in world history, when people consider the life and legacy of Jesus, his claims, his character with an open mind and an open heart, when people see Jesus for who he really is, even those who formerly didn't even believe in God, often I find that they find themselves encountering the one true God that they actually can believe in.

And so we're going to look at Jesus today. I want to invite you to just come and see. Just come and see this morning. Let's explore the data on this incredible person named Jesus of Nazareth.

Whether or not you end up believing he's God, you have to at least reckon with this guy who's incredibly unique, his incredible uniqueness.

Like, if you studied the world religions, if you considered all of world history, there really is, like, no one like this God. You know, there's this scholar, he's passed away not too long ago, right here in Berkeley.

His name was Huston Smith. And he's a really big deal, religious studies scholar, spent the majority of his career at MIT and Syracuse, and then he retired here in Berkeley, and he was a visiting faculty there at Cal.

[11 : 29] And in his classic textbook, *The World's Religions*, he observes something really interesting. He observes that in all of history, there have only been two people who have lived with such influence and who've lived such compelling lives and who've gained, like, hundreds of millions of followers across multiple millennia and made such an impact that it provoked people not just to ask, who are you, but what are you?

And he says, not Caesar, not Napoleon, not Socrates, only two, Jesus and Buddha. All right, but then he notes that for Buddha, Buddha consistently denied that he was God.

He only ever claimed to be human, but Jesus, on the other hand, this was a human who claimed to be God. This was a human who let people worship him.

Now, when Jim Jones and Charles Manson claimed to be God, they only ever managed to, you know, convince a tiny group, right, of unstable people. They never changed the world, and their legacy is really just that of being toxic mad men, right?

No one's gathering to worship them today, even just decades later. But with Jesus of Nazareth, he too claimed to be God, and yet this is someone you could make a case for as perhaps the most influential human to ever have lived, with hundreds of millions of followers, again, over multiple millennia.

[12 : 49] Think about that for a second. Think about that for a second. Like, try to come up with a list of, like, all the most positively influential, impactful, compelling, wise, loving, and compassionate people throughout world history.

All right, got that list? And then a list of all the people who ever claimed that they were God. There is only one person who is on both those lists.

Only one person who claimed to be God and got tons of people to also believe it, to devote their lives to him and gather in churches to worship him 2,000 years later.

And we ourselves are here listening right now, entertaining this question, because you know, we all know, right, that this is a question that's worth our time.

We know that if one of the most important, if not the most important, impactful person in history claimed to be God, this is a person that we cannot ignore.

[13 : 48] And as the late, great pastor Tim Keller would put it, the magnitude of Jesus' claims and the magnitude of his impact indicate you'd better not just doubt he's not God, you better know he's not God.

He gives this illustration, Keller, he says like, let's say you got a letter from the IRS, official IRS stationary, and it says you owe \$50 million in taxes, and you think to yourself, like, that can't be true, because I only made 50,000, right?

Right? Will you not at least pick up the phone, though? Right? Even let them place you on hold just to make sure. Why?

Because of the magnitude of the claim. When Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life, you only come to God through me, if you're gonna live as though that's not true, you'd better know that that's not true.

You'd better do your homework, you'd better do your due diligence. Because again, if you live without Jesus, and he really is God, the way, the truth, and the life, then you're living estranged from your maker and sustainer.

[14:53] You're going the wrong way. You're living in falsehood, and you're closer to death than life. And contrary to what you think, you're only inching further and further away from the most ideal version of yourself and the world.

You're forfeiting love and joy and peace and satisfaction, the satisfaction that your soul was made to enjoy. So with that said, I wanna turn to the data. I wanna turn to the data this morning, the most basic, undisputed data points surrounding Jesus, the facts that everyone can agree upon, whether you believe Jesus is God or not, the historical facts that no honest and thinking person can deny. Just put them out there for all of us to try to make sense of and account for, all right? And there are five things I wanna say. First, there was a man, Jesus of Nazareth, lived 2,000 years ago in Palestine who claimed not only to be Messiah, not only to be the servant of God, but he claimed to be God himself.

He let people worship him. He said he could forgive sins. And he said to know him and to see him and to receive him is to know and see and receive God himself. All right, so that's number one. Number two, thousands of people, thousands of people, people who liked him and people who hated him, they saw him do things that appeared to be miraculous.

[16:09] Thousands of people fed by five loaves and two fish, paralytics made to walk, lepers clean, right? The blind able to see, even the dead alive. And again, not all of these thousands of witnesses even liked or believed he was who he said he was, but they saw it, all right?

It appeared to them as miraculous. Number three, Jesus of Nazareth, he didn't just claim to be God, but he managed to convince the most staunchly monotheistic people, the people with the most transcendent view of God, he convinced thousands of first century Jewish people who lived to uphold the first and second commandment, right?

Don't have any other gods besides Yahweh, don't worship anything that's created or material as God, the last people in the world who would have believed he was God, he convinced them that he was God.

They were convinced that he was who he said he was. Number four, he was crucified, dead, and buried. And yet hundreds of people saw him again after that.

Even at one point, there were 500 who saw him at one time. And there is no record in all of ancient history of anyone ever surviving a Roman crucifixion.

[17:19] And in fact, there are five ancient sources outside of New Testament that can corroborate that he really was crucified to death and then seen again as alive. Number five, this apparent experience that people supposedly had of this supposedly risen Christ, what changed people?

It changed the world. It changed people so much that they went out into the world and even died to spread the news. They spread it all throughout the Mediterranean world, even though many were flayed for this, many were burned for this, thrown to the lions, crucified themselves.

They continued to spread the word and it's still being spread today across every continent. Now having laid out these undisputed points about Jesus, I know they don't prove that Jesus is God, right?

It doesn't prove that Christianity is true, but my question for you is how do we account for these data points? How do we make sense of these facts? Now maybe you're inclined to think all this Jesus stuff is just a myth, just a legend.

Like sure, this Jesus guy, maybe he was kind of special, but we can't really know the truth about him. I mean that was thousands of years ago. Maybe he was a pretty amazing, pretty special dude, but aren't these accounts about him in the Bible just kind of embellished tales that his followers kind of wove together?

[18 : 36] Maybe his followers, followers, followers put them together long after he died? How do we know they didn't put these words into Jesus' mouth, spin the stories about him to make him sound extra special?

You know, especially with their biases, right, and their ancient superstitions. Can we even read the New Testament as history? Well, I want to say that if we approach the scriptures literarily, right, as their authors intended, if we pay attention to how the New Testament is written, it is very much written, not as a myth, not as a legend, like any other ancient text that was written as a legend in that time, but it's actually quite intentionally historical.

Luke's gospel, how does Luke's gospel open? He says, as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past to write an orderly account for you that you may have certainty concerning the things you've been taught.

Luke's intention is accuracy, being historical, an accurate historical account and record in line with the eyewitnesses. And the rest of the New Testament is full of tidbits that you wouldn't expect to find in myths and legends.

You have historical and geographical details, right, details about the apostles' flaws. And not only that, but legends usually take over 100 years, 150 or more years to develop.

[20 : 04] But you know, even the most liberal scholars of the New Testament would say there's a consensus that the latest dates are within 70 to 80 years of the time of Jesus' crucifixion.

Meaning that these writings were written during the lifetime of eyewitnesses. These writings would have been falsifiable. Someone could have said, hey, I was there, that it was a lot more than five loaves and two fish, all right?

Someone could have said that. These accounts were written far too early to be fabricated and embellished. And not only that, but who would die? Who would die for a mere legend, right? Who would die for a hoax like the apostles did and like many early church Christians did? Would they really have given their lives for a lie? Like if they were the ones who hid Jesus' body? Now some have suggested, okay, maybe they, were seeing visions. They were hallucinating because they just wanted to believe it so badly. But really, over 500 people having the same hallucination and vision all at the same time and then able to convince another 3,000 Jewish people to follow them at Pentecost?

[21 : 12] I mean, what sounds like the bigger miracle? And speaking of bigger miracles, okay, could Christianity really have even spread and endured the way it has? Especially as a minority religious movement that was violently persecuted by the Roman Empire.

What legend has ever been that powerful and that successful when it wasn't true? Are we here today, 2,000 years later, because some Jewish fishermen overpowered or slipped past Roman guards, stole their rabbi's corpse, hid it, and then somehow wove together a legendary religion about a God who became a crucified man whose followers eventually won over like the Roman Empire?

Thomas Aquinas said that if these miraculous events about Jesus didn't actually happen, an even more unbelievable miracle happened, the eventual conversion of like the Roman world, all by the biggest lie in history.

Like sure, it's hard to believe in miracles and it's hard to believe Jesus is who he says he is. I get that, but might it be harder not to believe or to construct some other narrative? See, all this is to say that it is very unlikely that Jesus is just some legendary figure that we can treat, you know, like Odysseus.

He's more than that. But now, if he's not some mythical legend, then what options remain? Well, again, some would say he was just a good rabbinical teacher, a lecturer, a do-gooder.

[22 : 41] But the question is what kind of a good teacher claims to be God, tells you to eat his flesh and drink his blood, right? Jesus wasn't just teaching people to be nice. He was saying stuff like I am the I am, the one who's always existed.

I forgive sins. I'm gonna judge the world. To esteem Jesus as simply a nice teacher is to engage him with very, very selective hearing and not to take him in his entirety seriously.

And this is why C.S. Lewis said, a man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic or he would be the devil of

hell.

You must take your choice. Either this was and is the son of God or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God.

But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about us being a great human teacher. So it cannot be said that Jesus was simply a good teacher up there of Confucius and Buddha, Dr. King, Mother Teresa.

[23 : 46] Buddha and Mother Teresa would never have made such brazen claims. So then what? If not a mythical legend, if not a mere lecturer, is he a liar or a lunatic?

Well if you think he is, I want to at least commend you for taking all of his words seriously and viewing him in his entirety. But then I would ask, are you really ready to call him a liar or a lunatic? Are you really ready to reject him and put him on the crazy list with Jim Jones and Charles Manson and all the other power hungry cult leaders who claimed to be God? Does it seem like he belongs on the same list?

Have you studied his life, his character and is that really the most logical conclusion that you can come to that he is just a nut job? Or do not resonate with or at least find it hard to disagree that he is an incredible person?

As one Presbyterian theologian wrote, no one has ever yet discovered the word Jesus ought to have said or the deed he ought to have done. Nothing he does falls short. In fact, he is always surprising you and taking your breath away because he is incomparably better than you could imagine.

[24 : 59] He is tenderness without weakness, strength without harshness, humility without the slightest lack of confidence, holiness and unbending convictions without the slightest lack of approachability, power without insensitivity, passion without prejudice.

There is never a false step, never a jarring note. This is life at the highest when we're looking at Jesus. Like sure, when we consider Jesus' shocking divine claims, right, it might sound like he's a liar or he's a lunatic, but it's hard to make that call when we also consider his character.

And we might not be ready to adore him in faith and honor as the self-attesting Lord, but doesn't it seem just as difficult to abhor him in fear and hatred as the self-aggrandizing liar and lunatic?

Even if we don't believe that he's God, even if we don't believe he's sent from God or that he's the suffering servant and savior of the world who died on a cross to pay for the sins of the world, what's clear is that he believed this about himself.

And he consistently lived for that purpose and to that end. He said, I came not to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many.

[26 : 13] He said, I am the good shepherd who lays my life down for my sheep. And then just as was prophesied by Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 53, verse 7, it's in our bulletin today, he was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet opened not his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

Like whatever you believe about Jesus of Nazareth, this is incredible stuff that on the one hand he opens his mouth to wildly claim that he's God and yet on the other hand, the moment he's about to be crucified, he sees himself as the suffering servant of fulfillment of prophecy and he does not open his mouth in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

He doesn't say a word, but instead as both self-proclaimed God and suffering servant, he says in verse 4, he bears our griefs, he carries our sorrows, stricken, smitten, and afflicted in our place.

Verse 5, he was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, wounded so we could be healed. Verse 6 says he bore our sins. Verse 8, that he was cut off from the land of the living.

So now seriously, what kind of a man was this? What are we supposed to make of him? I mean, maybe after hearing of his taking on of this identity as a suffering servant, maybe now you are convinced that he was a lunatic because who would do this?

[27 : 44] Who would do this? Who would claim to be God and subject himself to such suffering? And if he was God, why would he silently allow himself to be an innocent sufferer of such injustice and how could he even die?

And like, maybe you're thinking to yourself, well, if I were God, I would never let this happen. But what I want to say to you this morning is maybe it's a good thing then that you're not God and that Jesus is.

What if the lunacy of Jesus as both God and suffering servant is not evidence against his mighty lordship, but evidence for his merciful lordship?

Not evidence against his forceful divinity, but evidence for his forgiving divinity. What if Jesus came to defy our very notions of God, notions of God that we've made after our own images?

As one Christian origin scholar, he writes, humanity wants and sometimes creates gods in its own image. Gods who serve the interests of the elites, gods who rule by power, but not gods who love, and especially who love the poor and the powerless.

[29 : 00] But the God of the early Christians did not follow that script because they believed God revealed himself as Jesus Christ, not as a wise man like Socrates, not as a strong man like Hercules, not as a powerful man like Augustus, not as a military commander like Alexander the Great.

Instead, Jesus appeared to be a humble, foolish, weak man who was born in a stable and who suffered on a cross. Like, get this.

What if Paul is right in his letter to the Corinthians that we read earlier? What if it's precisely the folly and the foolishness of the cross of Christ that's actually the power of God on foolish display?

Because see, this is actually what faithful Christians have always believed and celebrated about God. This paradox, this mystery, this God who has not only held the oceans in his hands and numbered every grain of sand, but a God who has also felt nails upon his hands and who bears the guilt of sinful man.

A holy God, set apart, holy, unique, unlike any other, so holy in his righteousness that he had to die for the heinous sins of the world and at the same time so holy in his love that he was glad to die for the heinous sinners of the world.

[30 : 20] And my question is, don't you at least want this to be true? And if so, might it be that it is precisely the unbelievability of Jesus as God that makes it so believable after all?

Might the second century African theologian Tertullian, might he have been on to something when he wrote, the Son of God died, absurd, and therefore utterly credible.

He was buried and rose again, impossible, and therefore a fact. Now, I want to admit that none of this, again, none of this proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus is the God of the universe.

But my question for all of us is, what's our better story of the world? What's your more intellectually credible and more existentially satisfying story?

How else shall we account for the data concerning Jesus of Nazareth? How shall we account for the empty tomb and the eyewitness accounts? How do you account for the impact that he and his followers have had on world history such that we are sitting here 2,000 years later and we're still celebrating the same virtues that came from his beautiful life, the virtues of humility and service and unselfish, sacrificial love that Paul commended 2,000 years ago?

[31 : 41] Look with me at our text in Philippians chapter 2. Paul's saying, do nothing from selfish ambition and we say amen, all of us, if you're Christian or not. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form God emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross.

Therefore God has highly exalted him. Do you see that humility, servanthood, selfless, sacrificial love commended as virtues because they are grounded in the reality of a crucified and risen God? Like what genius, what genius could have made this world transforming story up? Either we believe that some fisherman, a tax collector and a former Pharisee invented a legend about a crucified God that stretched into every atom of our culture or we believe that Jesus is God in the flesh, crucified and risen 2,000 years ago and the world could never be the same.

You know, there's this historian, his name is Tom Holland, he's not Spider-Man and he wrote this incredible book. A few of us read it a couple years ago, it's called Dominion, How the Christian Revolution Remade the World.

[33 : 07] And if you ask him, he'll tell you that he's not a Christian but also that he is at the same time thoroughly Christian. And what he means by that is he doesn't worship Jesus, he doesn't pray, he doesn't go to church, but he most definitely understands himself in all of Western culture as a product of the movement that Jesus Christ sparked.

You know, this is in line with a growing body of literature testifying to the undeniable impact of Christianity even on our secular modern Western culture. And so, you know, in an interview, Tom Holland, he says that, you know, as a boy and as a young historian, he was always fascinated with, like, the strong men of the ancient world.

The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Spartans, like, he calls them the big T-Rexes of the ancient world. The empires that our history books feature and highlight, right?

And he says he found, you know, the little lambs, like the nation of Israel, to be unimpressive and actually quite boring. But in his studies, he says he's begun to be horrified.

He began to be horrified by how mercilessly these strong man empires treated the weak. And so he began to ask himself, why am I horrified at, like, the Spartans throwing babies who didn't meet their standards down the ravine?

[34 : 28] And why am I glad to live in a time and in a society where we put babies on life support? Why do I value compassion, service, and sacrifice? Why can't I follow Nietzsche in casting off all moral absolutes and viewing life as all about self-interested power and control rather than selfless love?

Well, although he isn't yet a churchgoer, he's not a man of prayer, what he ultimately ascribes this to at the end of the day is what he considers the heart of the Christian revolution. Quote, the image of God dead on a cross, a twisted and defeated corpse that's found to be the glory of the creator of the universe.

This is why I believe that Jesus is God. There is no other story like it. It's so unbelievable that I have to believe it. So the question is, what will we believe?

Is Jesus crucified and risen? Is he really God? Well, again, I can't think of any better news for the world, news that's both intellectually credible and existentially satisfying.

And my prayer is that this church would believe that with all their hearts, that those outside these walls would believe that Jesus is this kind of a God, that God is this kind of a God, crucified and risen and for us in Christ.

[35 : 55] This is the gospel. Will you pray with me? Lord, if we are not amazed at the kind of God you are as revealed to us in the crucified and risen Christ, would you make us amazed?

And would you open our eyes? Help us to see, I pray. in Jesus' name, amen.