

Christ's extravagant promise

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[0 : 00] Father, we ask your blessing on the children who are out in Sunday school and those children down in the nursery. Father, may your Holy Spirit move mightily in their lives, bringing them to a saving faith in Jesus, keeping them in a saving faith in Jesus, helping them to grow as disciples of Jesus.

Father, we thank you that you have blessed us in many ways, the offering that we've collected. Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would make us a congregation that wants to give, that wants to bless, that wants to send, that wants to share, that wants to lift Jesus high in this city and to the ends of the earth.

Father, may your Holy Spirit do that work in us day by day. And now as we gather to think about Jesus, to think about his word, to think about what he's done for us on the cross, Father, pour out the Holy Spirit deep within us.

Make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, learning to live day by day for your glory. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated.

So, actually, we're going to start by putting... You don't need your Bibles for this, but Andrew, could you put a scripture text right up on the screen right off the bat? So this is in case I put you all to sleep and you get nothing else out of the sermon.

[1 : 20] We're going to begin with this verse. It's in the ESV. I'll explain a little bit in a moment why it has his and all that type of stuff. But right back from the early church fathers, and they don't talk about it very much anymore, but right back from the early church fathers through the reformers and all of that, many, many, many people would say that these words deserve to be written in gold.

That it should have just been black all the way. And then when it comes to this, it should have been written in gold because they're such precious words. So let's say this together, please.

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

And this is what Jesus says in the temple. So it's a wonderful verse. I'm going to try to unpack a little bit for you in a few minutes.

But, you know, it's really interesting the context within which Jesus talks about this and makes this really quite an extravagant promise.

[2 : 35] If you look at it there for a second, that anyone at all, anybody who's thirsty, that's the only requirement to come to Jesus is having a thirst. A thirst for maybe a cleansing, thirst for pardon, thirst for forgiveness, a thirst to be able to forgive, thirst for meaning, thirst for significance, thirst for beauty.

Like just if anyone thirsts in any way, come to me and drink. And by coming to me and drink, it's an image of believing in Jesus. And then Jesus says, I'm going to summarize a whole range of scriptural sayings that if you come to me, you drink, and out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

It's an extravagant promise. An extravagant promise. Almost too much for even Christians, for many, many Christians to believe.

And it's really interesting the context within which Jesus says this. Like it's really fascinating. I don't know how many of you have been watching on Netflix, *The Wild Wild Country*. It's become a very talked about documentary.

Wild Wild Country. And it's about something that happened in the late 70s, but in particular in 19, I think it was 1981, an Indian guru, Rajneesh, I think that's his name, the Bhagwan, brought his whole commune from Bombay, India, to settle in the middle of Oregon.

[4 : 10] And in an empty place, a ranch that I think was a 10-square-mile ranch, out in the middle of nowhere. And the documentary, it's a fascinating documentary, maybe a bit disturbing.

I'm not saying that everybody should watch it. I mean, one of the reasons I'm going to watch it again after it's over is it's really both frightening and fascinating to see people who can lie boldly with no hint whatsoever of guilt.

Like they can just lie and say BS with impunity. Like it's actually sort of, I mean, it's on one level disturbing. It's also sort of fascinating to watch. But here's the thing.

Why am I bringing this up? So if you watch this, the Bhagwan, the guru, who has thousands and thousands of followers, they show you several times, quite a few times, they give you film footage of him speaking.

And every time he says a few words, like everybody's either going like in ecstasy like this, or they're pumping their fist, or they're dancing, or they're clapping, and everybody is celebrating every time he speaks.

[5 : 21] And in fact, they almost get into a type of ecstatic frenzy of dancing. And I, you know, I'm listening to it, and I think, gosh, a lot of this is just so trite, or foolish, or stupid, or just wrong.

But for them, as they listen, they just get unbelievably excited by it. And so, you know, it's very easy. In fact, it's interesting, just this week, one of the fellows that I've talked about most, a non-Christian I've talked about the most, about the Christian faith with, in a coffee shop, he asked me out of the blue what I was speaking on on Friday, on Sunday.

So I told him about this verse, and what I was speaking on. And when I told him the verse, he sort of rolled his eyes. Like, you're going to see, you know.

And he said, well, you know, it's easy for, you know, you religious people to get all excited about stuff like that. But I didn't push it.

I just told him a little bit about what the text was. And, you know, it's just often just bear witness. I don't, just, you just bear witness. I wasn't intimidated by it. But afterwards, this is one of many, many times where I wished afterwards I could have said something to him that I didn't say.

[6 : 39] So I'm saying it to you, you captive audience. And what I wish I'd said to him is, no, no, no, no, you don't understand the context that Jesus said this.

And it's really quite remarkable. So let's look at the context. Because it's actually not at all like the Bhagwan. And it's not at all like my friend thought. Let's look at the context. The context is one of snarky comments, murderous intent, intent, massive confusion, and name-calling.

Like, it's really the most completely different context than you could possibly imagine. So if you get your Bibles and turn to John chapter 7, we'll look at the context.

It's a very, very curious context that leads to this comment. John chapter 7, verse 1. After this, Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders were seeking to kill him.

Now just sort of pause for a second. What's just going on before this is the story of Jesus feeding 5,000 men with five loaves and two fishes. He's walking on the water.

[7 : 47] And a sort of a controversy that came as a result of him feeding the 5,000. And that's what's going on just before this. So after this, verse 1 again, Jesus went about in Galilee.

He would not go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders were seeking to kill him. Now, the Jewish feast of booths was at hand. And just pause there again. So what this means, John's just giving us a little bit of a time marker.

And what he's saying is six months have passed. Because that's approximately the distance from Passover, which was roughly when the last event happened. It happened just before Passover.

And now it's about, it's six months later. And this is, there's three sort of great feasts in the Jewish calendar at that time.

The first one's Passover. Then there's a break of quite a few months. Then there's what we call the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. And then a few months after that, there's this final feast.

[8 : 49] It's called the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles. And it remembers how the Israelites were in the wilderness and how God provided for them. When I grew up, I grew up in a Jewish neighborhood.

I grew up from the age of five to 14. I lived in a neighborhood where everybody was Jewish. All my friends were Jewish. There was only one other non-Jewish family on our street of whatever, 60 houses.

and all my friends had bar mitzvahs. And in fact, you know, I find it so interesting when a lot of people of my generation, the Anglican Church, talk about how Canada used to be Christian and all. I didn't grow up thinking that because I grew up and everybody was Jewish. The Jewish holidays in the fall, it was a great thing for a kid because the elementary school, all the Jewish parents kept all their kids home.

And this would have been a school that, I don't know, would have had like maybe six or seven hundred kids in the elementary school. You could fit all of the non-Jewish kids in one classroom. I'm not making that up.

[9 : 52] In one classroom and we weren't crowded. And after the first year, my mom just let me stay home with my Jewish friends. So you got two extra holidays in the fall. The nicest time of the year, you get two extra holidays.

I can't remember what they were both for. Anyway, so what's just happened? It's the Feast of Tabernacles. The other time marker that John is giving us here is he's letting you know that in about six more months, Jesus is going to die on the cross.

But this is a big festival. And when it says the feast, this is, depending on, scholars differ at that time whether they celebrated for seven or eight days. It doesn't matter to us.

Some of you want to do a PhD dissertation on it, go ahead and do it. But it doesn't really matter. But it's long, seven or eight days. So that's the feast, okay? Okay? So it's one of the big three where Jewish people would all try to go to Jerusalem.

So that's the context. Okay? Sorry, back to verse two. Now the Jewish feast of booths was at hand. So Jesus' brothers said to Jesus, leave here and go to Judea that your disciples also may see the works you are doing.

[10 : 53] For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world. For not even his brothers believed in him. That's just a, remember, this is the context.

This is what leading up to this unbelievable, this extravagant promise by Jesus. It's really quite remarkable. And in the original language, Jesus' brothers are speaking in a snarky way.

It's as if they're saying, you know, listen, because Galilee is Hicksville, okay? I don't know how many of you are from small towns or rural areas. And I don't mean like small town, like Muskoka's, where all the rich people go in the summer.

I mean like, where no rich people are. It's just Hicksville, you know? Because I had somebody here who spends a lot of time in Saskatchewan at the 8 o'clock service. I said, you know, if you want to be famous, don't live in northern Saskatchewan.

Okay? Like, nobody cares in northern Saskatchewan. Like, go to Toronto or Vancouver if you want to make a big splash, if you want to become famous. So that's what they're saying. Leave Hicksville, if you're such a big deal, go to Jerusalem.

[11 : 59] And so, even Jesus' brothers don't believe him and they're sort of snarky. Put him down. And Jesus says to them, verse 6, my time has not yet come, but your time is always here.

The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.

Now, just sort of pause there. Some of you might be saying, well, what's up? Why on earth is it that Jesus says you can't hate his brothers? Like, there's lots of hate in the world. Like, what's up with that?

Well, what's going on here with this, Jesus' comment is this. In, in, in the bulletin or in the, the growing in grace section, I always try to share three different types of attitudes or sayings with you that emerge from the text that help us to live the Christian life.

I also, there's also a memory verse and there's sort of a prayer that flows from the text, which I, I write, and it's available to you every week to, to consider. And I think, I can't, I should have brought up a bulletin.

[13 : 08] I can't remember if I have it exactly, but, what, what Jesus is saying is that, um, because of the fall, because human beings are in rebellion against God and want to be God.

That if God, the Son of God, actually comes, people are going to hate him. Why? Because we want to be God. We want to be God. We want to be like God.

It's the central human problem. Buddhists are mistaken. The central human problem isn't desire. You know, many, uh, Hindu, uh, types of faiths, they're just mistaken.

It's not the problem that, uh, people just have a different, have to have a type of different consciousness or something like that. Muslims are just mistaken. The problem isn't just that we don't, uh, submit to Allah and, uh, and practice the five pillars of Islam. Christians say the problem is that fundamentally every human being wants to be God. They want to be like God. We want to be, I want to be like God. That's my problem. And so if we have a world where people want to be God or want to be like God, if God actually shows up, we won't like him. [14:19] That's what Jesus is trying to talk about. I think what I put in the bulletin is, uh, God can't reveal himself without offending us. God cannot reveal himself without offending us.

Now, it's obviously a little bit more subtle than that because this is all leading us up to the test where Jesus says, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and, uh, and believe on me.

And as the scripture says, out of him will flow rivers of living water. So obviously on one hand, we have a bit of an attraction to God and we know we need a savior. It's a bit of a mystery, but fundamentally God's word, God revealing himself will always offend us at some level.

Why? Well, because I have my God project. I have my God desires. I, I want to be like God. I don't like God correcting me. Either by telling me something I should do or telling me to stop doing something I should do.

And that's sort of what Jesus is getting at. He's not saying that obviously, he's not, I mean, he's not, I mean, good grief. He knows that Jewish leaders are trying to kill him. So he knows there's hatred in the world.

[15:34] But that he's, he's saying, you know, I'm doing everything according to God's plan. My, my plan isn't to try to get as much publicity as possible. In fact, there's only, yeah, there's, I'm not trying to get publicity.

I'm not getting, trying to get fame. I'm doing everything according to God's plan. So, verse nine, after saying this, the brothers leave, he remains in Galilee.

Verse nine, after saying this, he remained in Galilee. But verse 10, but after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly, but in private. It's harder to translate in English, but he didn't, his, his not doesn't mean he's not going up at all.

It just means he wasn't going up with them or at that time or in that way or in that manner, according to their schedule and their goals. He wasn't going to go and then have them parading around and mocking him and trying to draw a crowd.

He wasn't going to go that. He's just not going on. He's going on his own terms, not on theirs. But after they've left, he goes up quietly. He goes up incognito, so to speak.

[16:36] Verse 11, the Jewish leaders were looking for Jesus at the feast and saying, where is he? And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some of the people said, he's a good man.

Others said, no, he's leading the people astray. Yet for fear of the leaders, no one spoke openly of him. About the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching.

So this would be day four. Day four of weekly religious ceremonies and prayers and lots of feasting. Day four, Jesus goes to the temple and starts to preach, teach.

Verse 15, the Jewish people therefore marveled, saying, how is it that this man has learning when he has never studied? So just sort of pause here.

This is a, it's a very subtle thing in the English. You know, part of the problem is, and by the way, one of the reasons maybe that God has called me to be a priest, a presbyter is because my natural inclination is to race through texts.

[17:37] And this forces me to keep going slow and trying to look at the nuances. This is actually sort of grudging admiration by the Jewish leaders of Jesus, but also a put down.

The grudging admiration comes in saying, wow, like, he has, like, he can teach. But, you know, we know he's not educated. Like, we know he didn't go to Harvard or U of T or Princeton.

You know, he doesn't have certification. He's not ordained. So it's, it's, it's both, it's a very fascinating thing. There's a bit of a grudging admiration, but they can't grudgingly admire Jesus without putting him in his place, putting him down.

He doesn't have the proper teaching, doesn't have the proper credentials, but doesn't have the proper, you know, lineage. He's just not proper. And so his brothers put him down.

People are grumbling about him. People are trying to kill him. And even when he starts to speak and people sort of admire him, they can't admire him without also sort of putting him down.

[18 : 42] So how does Jesus respond? Well, how does he respond? Verse 16. So Jesus answered them. My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true. And in him, there is no falsehood. Has not Moses given you the law, yet none of you keeps the law?

Why do you seek to kill me? Now, just sort of pause there. Some of you might be going, like, what's up with this? Like, what's up with this, George?

You've got to do God's will to be able to understand Jesus? Like, George, what's up with that? That doesn't make sense. Like, I don't have to do God's will, you know, to know math.

I don't have to be trying to live a certain type of life to know math. I don't have to live a certain type of life to know, you know, about economic theory or geography or read the paper and learn things or read blogs.

[19 : 54] So what's up with this? If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. Like, George, isn't that just one of those types of things of, like, just surrender your mind, kiss your brain goodbye, and, um, just trust me, uh, like, those of you who will, if you end up seeing that Netflix documentary, you can see the terrible things that happen when otherwise very, very bright people just completely and utterly surrender their mind to a charismatic leader.

I'm not giving anything away because it's in the introduction to this, this film clip. This is something that took place in the, in the early to mid eighties in middle of Oregon. And by the time the story is finished being told, it's the largest bioterrorism act in the history of the United States.

The largest immigration fraud in the history of the United States. Wire fraud, multiple attempts of murder, were all connected to people who surrender their mind to a charismatic leader.

And many of the people, on one hand, they show film clips, people who know that they're doing horrendous things, talk as if they're doing wonderful things.

And so, George, what's up with this? Well, here, Jesus isn't saying that you have to do God's will to be able to understand math.

[21 : 28] And he's not saying you have to be able to do, you have to be a moral person just to understand, to be able to know who the leading goal scorer is in the NHL. Like, Jesus isn't being stupid. But, think about what you need to know.

So, first of all, the first context is, he's saying, how do you think you can understand who I am if you're trying to murder me, an innocent person? Like, we can see there's some wisdom to that, eh? Like, how on earth can you think you're trying to figure out me and my teaching if all the law, all the while, all you're doing is thinking about how you're going to get me killed? How you're going to abuse me?

Is your power to get me killed? But, Jesus is pointing here to a, it's a whole other sermon topic, but I wanted to bring it out to you. It's a, a key spiritual principle when it comes to, to knowing God.

And that is, that in knowing God, it's not that we don't think about what God has said. It's not that we don't think about God's word. It's not that we don't think about Jesus. But for many things in the Christian life, we do not think our way to clarity.

[22 : 40] We obey our way to clarity. For many things to do in the Christian life, for many of the truths in the Christian life, we do not just think our way to clarity, we obey our way to clarity.

Well, why is that? Well, because, what is it, how can we know God? Like, we can't, if God, if God, the God that Jesus describes really exists, if he really does exist, if that really is the God that does exist, and has made himself known, we can't know God without bowing to him.

We can't know God without worshiping him. We cannot know God without surrendering to him.

Like, that's the only way we can know God.

If the God described by Jesus really exists. And, and so it is, for many, many things in the Christian life, if we just absolutely, it doesn't mean that we have to be perfect at doing things, but if we absolutely refuse to do something, absolutely refuse to do something, then no amount of thinking will help you.

I've shared this story before. I have time. I'll share it to you again. It was quite a few years ago, and, I was, I, I had just preached on this text at the morning.

[24 : 10] I used to have an evening service, and I preached on an aspect of this, one of the two, so there's an evening text. We just follow a lectionary. I'm going to be preaching on the, the first text, I think it was, but we read the second text.

I don't even look at it. I just focus on the text I'm going to preach on. And it turned out the second text, was sort of controversial around the relationship of men and women. Now, I had talked about that text a couple of months earlier in the morning service, so I didn't preach on it the Sunday evening service, because I'd sort of talked about it a couple of months earlier.

But after the service, there was a young woman, very, very bright, and her, and her, her fiance, and also very, very bright. I mean, multiple, multiple degrees, and, and very, very good, very nice people.

And they came, and they asked me about the text. And, and I started to try to explain the language, and, and, and context, and all. But then I had one of these moments, when it's as if the Holy Spirit said to me, George, you need to say something to them.

And so I, I, I changed my course, because we, after church, we're talking about 15 or 20 minutes, and it wasn't getting anywhere. And I said, I said to, I said to them, let's say that you decided that this is going to be your project for the next decade.

[25 : 22] And so over the next decade, you're going to learn Greek, you're going to learn Aramaic, you're going to learn Hebrew, you're going to maybe learn Syriac, or some other version that the New Testament was translated in.

You're going to master archaeology, you're going to master Roman law, you're going to master Roman and Greek literature, you're going to, you're going to master linguistics and sociolinguistics and anthropology, and you're going to do all of that to become unbelievably well, scholarly, and, and just have knowledge to the gazoo.

And after you've done all of that study, after 10 years, you come back to the text, and it actually just means what it says, will you try to obey it? And they both, without pausing at all, said, absolutely not.

And I said, well, there's nothing I can do to explain the text to you. Like, if you absolutely refuse to even attempt to live the text, how can I ever explain the text to you?

And there's many, many things in the Christian life, because if Jesus really is the Savior and the Lord, if he really is, that if we come to him and drink, and believe in him, that out of, out of, out of him, that he is the fountain of life, that, that, that, that the Holy Spirit will come, and, like, I, it, it, it's going to involve me learning to bow my knee to Jesus.

[26 : 46] So, that's what Jesus is saying that here. He's, I mean, he's just really confronting them. How on earth is it you think you can figure me out if you're trying to murder me? But his context has a very important principle for us to think through, that in many things in the Christian life, we obey our way to clarity, rather than think our way to clarity.

Anyway, so, so how do they respond to this? You know, because he just is revealed now in public that the Jewish leaders are trying to kill him. And, Jesus lived in a time which wasn't very politically correct, and people were very direct, and, quite willing to be insulting.

And the response of the crowd, verse 20, is the crowd answered, you have a demon. Like, we might say, you're insane. You're, you've lost it.

Who is seeking to kill you? In verse 21, Jesus says, I did one work. Now, what is, what's caused in John's gospel? What, what is the spark that ignites their simmering envy and hatred of Jesus? So, for the Jewish leaders, they, they have this growing envy of Jesus and hatred of Jesus, and there's a spark that ignites it so that it starts to burn. And what it is, is, and it's recorded in John chapter 5, is on the Sabbath, Jesus does two things to offend the religious establishment.

[28 : 15] He heals a man who's been an invalid for 38 years, which offends them, they consider it work, you're not supposed to work. The other thing is, he asked the man to carry his mat, so he's offended them twice.

And that's, that's what's offended, and that's what Jesus is referring to. Verse 21, I did one work, and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision, not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers, and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.

If on the Sabbath, a man receives circumcision so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?

Like, do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment. So Jesus doesn't sort of get back at them and say, listen, you call me a demon, you've got demons. Like, he doesn't just sort of go, yeah, yeah, you've got demons.

No, you have more demons. No, he doesn't do that. He just goes right to the point. Like, he said, you guys are thinking crazy. Like, you really are. Just think about it for a second. Like, circumcision is the ritual that you have to have to become part, so to speak, of physical Israel, of visible Israel.

[29 : 24] It doesn't save. That requires a heart transformation. Right? By the way, in, yeah, anyway, I almost took us off on a rabbit trail. And Jesus says, listen, we all understand that that's fine.

Well, how on earth can it not be right to make a whole man well on the Sabbath? Like, how can that be breaking any rule? And it's actually not breaking the Bible, it's just breaking your traditions. So he challenges them on their anger.

Now, it actually has some effect because it must be that for some of the crowd, as we're going to see in a moment, they're thinking back one moment, yeah, they were really upset about that about a year ago when he did something like that, weren't they?

And, oh yeah, like, before he started to speak, we were a bit nervous about speaking out loud about Jesus because we could sort of sense that there's this hostility going on.

So the people, on one level, they hear this rebuke and look how they respond. Verse 25, some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, is not this the man whom they seek to kill?

[30 : 24] And here he is speaking openly and they say nothing to him. Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? But, we know where this man comes from and when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from.

And just sort of pause, what the Old Testament, which our Jewish friends call it the Tanakh and we call it the Old Testament, and it had many, many prophecies about the Messiah and the Jewish people of the day, they basically looked at all of the prophecies that really refer to Jesus' second coming, that he'll come in glory, that everybody will know, that's spectacular.

They miss the thing about the virgin shall conceive, they miss the suffering servant text, they miss all this other stuff. And so they're just thinking like the same way that we think of the second coming where Jesus is just going to come in clouds and power and glory and everyone will know.

And that's why they're confused, right? So verse 28, Jesus proclaimed as he taught in the temple, you know me and you know where I come from but I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true and him you do not know.

I know him for I come from him and he sent me. It's once again Jesus saying I've come from God. He keeps going on and on about this. I've come from God. I am God, the son of God, sent by the father in the power of the spirit, born of the virgin Mary to live amongst you.

[31 : 52] But the crowd and the leaders sort of understand that this big claim he's making in verse 30, so they were seeking to arrest him but no one laid a hand on him.

Why? Because his hour had not yet come. So just pause. What this text is saying is God had a time and a purpose for Jesus coming and the purpose of Jesus' coming is to die upon the cross.

And Jesus has to resist temptation. The father doesn't keep temptation away from Jesus. But what this text is saying is that God just stops Jesus from being arrested.

Like, why didn't Jesus get arrested? God stopped them. Do they go into details? Well, how can they go into details about that? It's just God stopped them. That's what John now realizes as he writes it. Verse 31, yet many of the people believed in Jesus. They said, when the Christ appears will he do more signs than this man has done? The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.

[33 : 03] Jesus then said, I will be with you a little longer and then I am going to him who sent me. You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am, you cannot come.

Now, what Jesus is saying here is, it's a very deep text. On one level, he says, I'm going to die. I'm going to die on the cross. And after I've died on the cross to taste all there is to taste of death, I'm going to ascend into heaven.

And the other thing, though, is this thing here, where I am, you cannot come. You notice that? Go read the Athanasian Creed. This touches on the deep mystery that God, the Son of God, never stops being God.

And yet, he takes into himself our human nature. The Athanasian Creed said, as God, he has no beginning. As man, he's born in Bethlehem. And this just teases open these profound mysteries of the fact that there's just one person, but he has a double nature.

And I won't say anything more about it other than that's what he says. And the leaders and the people are confused. They say to one another, verse 35, where does this man intend to go that we will not find him?

[34 : 20] Does he intend to go to the dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What does he mean by saying, you will seek me and you will not find me? And where I am, you cannot come.

They don't know what it means. And it's in that context, four days later, or three days later, on the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. So you see the context? The context is his brothers are snarky and put him down.

We see all of the smart people, all of the bright people, all of the people who go to the right type of parties and have the right connections, they're the ones who want to kill Jesus.

The crowd is confused about Jesus. They're quite willing to call him a name and then on one level, the next breath, they're saying, well, maybe he's the real thing. And so it's in the midst of conflict, confusion, and all of that that they make this remarkable claim.

[35 : 34] Jesus makes this remarkable claim. So where are we? Just to close up. Actually, Andrew, could you put up the first point? Yeah, it's going to be a three-hour sermon, by the way.

I have four points. I spent 34 minutes on the first point. Just to sort of summarize it here. Here's the first thing that's really important to understand. The Father sent the Son to save you, not because he weighed your merits, but in order to pardon your offenses.

The Father sent the Son to save you, not because he weighed your merits, but in order to pardon your offenses. This is so brilliantly seen in this text. Right? This isn't, oh, gosh, Jesus, you're so wonderful.

Please come speak to us more. Speak to us more. Give me more. Give me more. No. They don't believe him. They want to kill him. They're snarky to him.

They're confused by him. They don't understand. It's not, and that's how it is with every human being. It's not as if God looks down at you and me and my life and says, gosh, George was such a, wow, is he ever just saying to me, you know, I want to know more and more of you all of his life.

[36 : 42] And so finally, because he's finally just, he's starting to applaud. It's like after the band is played the first time and everybody's standing up with a standing ovation, clapping and clapping so the band will come out.

That's not like it was. That's not how it was. If you give it like a music example, everybody's out somewhere else. The room is empty.

Everybody's outside having a cigarette or in the bar having a drink. In the actual room where the musicians are, nobody's there and nobody wants the musician to come and play. That's the context within which God sends his Savior.

And if you could put up the second slide, Andrew, that would be really good. The resurrection of Jesus changes everything, vindicating him, his work, and his words.

The resurrection of Jesus changes everything, vindicating him, his work, his words. In text after text after text, Jesus keeps saying, I'm going to go to the Father. How does he go to the Father?

[37 : 40] He goes to the Father first by dying upon the cross and then tasting all there is to taste of death and then rising from the dead. And if Jesus hadn't risen from the dead, like, before I mention the Bhagwan, how many of you here knew of him?

Well, the only reason that he's sort of known again is because there's this documentary which has gotten lots of talk. Well, why? Because he made all, the Bhagwan made these remarkable claims that he was going to change, create a new man that would change the whole human race.

Well, he didn't. And nobody remembers him. And Jesus would have just been like the Bhagwan if he hadn't risen from the dead. The resurrection changes everything.

It changes everything. If it's true, it changes everything. You know, the remarkable thing about the resurrection is there's enough historical evidence that if you are seeking and you look at the evidence for the resurrection, you can say that I am not kissing my brains goodbye to believe in the

resurrection.

There is enough evidence to believe, but there's not enough evidence to force you to believe. Which is how it works on the Christian life. There's enough evidence to believe, but not so much evidence to force you to believe.

[38 : 58] But if Jesus really did rise from the dead, if the grave is empty, it changes everything, then these words are true. Could we say these, could you put up the scripture, could you say this text with me as we're trying to draw in this to a close?

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

There's two things I want to show you very briefly about this text which is so precious. And it's one of the reasons why the ESV is actually quite remarkable here. And I've kept the word him to refer to all human beings.

And that's because in the original language, so in the original language they can use the masculine pronoun like that to refer to all human beings. But the original language is actually a very, very interesting double meaning.

It means that later on if you go back to your Bible translation, some of the Bible translations are going to translate this differently because the question is who is the his in the last part of the verse?

[40 : 06] And it can have a double meaning. And so here's the first one. Andrew, if you could wrap up the third point. The first meaning is if you are thirsty, come to Jesus and drink and live for he is the source of the river of life.

That's a completely valid way to understand the original language. Jesus is saying, you know what, if you're thirsty. You know, Paul, and there's other parts in the Bible where it talks about sin and it talks about guilt and it talks about shame and in this part Jesus is just sharing about himself in a very different context.

If you're thirsty, come to me and drink. Why? When you come to me and drink and coming to me and drink is a way of believing in me, you will discover that I am the source of the rivers of life.

I was, just this week I had two conversations around this text in my coffee shop. The one I've already shared, the other one, very different type of context because the person he was sharing with me about, you know, he asked, he was talking to me a little bit about why anybody would become a Christian and he didn't really feel like he was guilty or anything like that and I was thinking about this text and I said, well, you know, Jesus says if you're thirsty, come to him and I tried to quote the text.

I hadn't memorized it then. I tried to share the text with him and he sort of thought, well, that's sort of interesting and I shared with him the story of Paul Henderson. Some of you are too young to know who Paul Henderson is but there was a very famous hockey series in the 70s between Canada and the Soviet Union to see who was the best hockey power in the world and the USSR were up several games.

[41 : 57] I can't remember, it was going to be an eight-game series or something like that and Canada was down and if Canada was going to win the series, they had to win the last three games and Paul Henderson who used to play for the Leafs, he scored the game-winning goal in each of the last three games for Canada to beat the Soviet Union.

Like, this was such a big thing. School was canceled to watch the last game. Okay, I mean, they couldn't officially say to school but in the biggest possible way they said, don't come to school but for those who did, you actually didn't go to class, they had TV set up in the different places so students could watch it together and my mom, who's watched exactly one hockey game in her life, she watched that final game and, I mean, maybe she's watched more since then and it was a big thing.

Paul Henderson. In fact, you might not know it but what's now called Wilfrid Laurier University which regrettably is constantly in the news for inordinate political correctness, it used to be called Waterloo Lutheran University and it was right around this time that they decided they were no longer going to be Lutheran, they were going to be secular and they wanted to change the name of the school and they had a poll of the students and the overwhelming majority of students wanted to name the university Paul Henderson University and the Board of Governors overrode that but Paul Henderson within about a year of this he was at the peak of his career, peak of his earning power, the greatest hockey moment in Canadian history to that point in time and his response was, is that all there is?

There must be something more and within a year he'd become a Christian. You see, these words of Jesus are very true. If anyone thirsts, come to me.

And the wonderful thing about this text is it doesn't say to you as a Christian, listen, if you thirst, come to me and drink and you'll never thirst again. It doesn't say that, does it? It's both a wonderful example of how you become a Christian if you thirst, if you suspect that there must be something more.

[44 : 01] Come to Jesus. He is the source of the rivers of life. And that's how you become a Christian, to drink of him.

But at the same time, it also just means in our day-to-day world as we get thirsty to come to Jesus and drink because he is the source of the rivers of life.

But this verse can also be translated in another way, completely valid, has a double meaning in Greek. And the double meaning is that the rivers of life flow out of the Christian. So you could put up the final point, Andrew.

When you believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit both abides in you and flows out of you. That when I come to Jesus for that first time and say, Jesus, I believe that you are the source, the fountain of life, the source of the rivers of life and I'm thirsty.

And in fact, actually, you know, I hadn't thought of it until this week. What led me to give my life to Jesus wasn't because I wanted Jesus to pay for my sins, although I knew he did that.

[45 : 12] It was that I had a sense that there had to be something more. That's what led me to Christ. There must be something more. And this wonderful text says that when you drink of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the rivers of life, it both is now inside of each Christian, but it flows out of us too.

It explains the normal Christian life, that the normal Christian life is to serve, is to give, is to go to Angola, is to try to church on Wednesday.

It's to think of how you can go and how you can give and how you can make a difference. And it means, how can you make a difference to the kids in the church and how can you make a difference for the church and how can you make a difference? It's because it's of the nature of having faith in Jesus that the Holy Spirit both abides in us but flows now out of us as a river of life. Could we all say, could you put the verse up again, Andrew? Could we all say this together? Could you all stand, please? Can we say this again together? In fact, I really encourage you to consider memorizing this verse.

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

[46 : 38] If you are here and you have not come to Jesus, I encourage you to say, Jesus, I am thirsty. I want to drink from you.

I believe that you are the source of the river of life. There is no better time than today to come to Jesus and say, Jesus, I come to you as thirsty. Be to me that fountain of living waters.

And for all of us, we all thirst day by day, those of us, brothers and sisters who are in Christ. Come to Jesus on a regular basis and say, Jesus, I am so thirsty.

I come to you. I come to you, Jesus. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, thank you for Jesus.

Thank you, Father, that you didn't sort of wait until we all had our lives together and we're giving you a standing ovation waiting for you to come and show up so we'd only cheer louder.

Father, it wasn't that way at all. We thank you, Father, that you saw us. We had our backs turned to you. We were resisting you. We didn't want you. And still you loved us and still you sent your son to die on the cross.

[47 : 46] Still you sent your son to be the one who could come among us as the source of the fountain of life so that all who thirst can come to him to receive that eternal life.

Father, we thank you for Jesus. We thank you for your great love. We ask that your Holy Spirit move within us to come to you again and again and again when we are thirsty. And that, Father, you would teach us not to quench the Spirit, but that the Holy Spirit, that we might walk in the Spirit as we seek to make a difference in this world for the good of the world and your great glory.

And we ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.