

True Fear leading to True Freedom

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[0 : 00] Lord, thank you so much for a wonderful time to come together. Wonderful that the weather is, although hot, it's nice, we're snow-free. Thank you for this place that we're gathering in. Thank you for the friendships and the family that exist here in this congregation. Thank you for your word. Thank you for this time together, we pray in Jesus' name.

You may be seated. I have a really, really good friend I grew up with, and he, it's really funny, our lives have really gone down the same track.

Got married a month apart, he's a minister. We both grew up in the same town, the same church. Anyways, we play a ton of practical jokes on each other, have some good laughs.

Anyways, a couple years ago, he signed me up for a mailing list for an American faith healer. And periodically, every month, I would get these letters with like a gold plastic wallet that said, if I put in \$100 in this wallet and mail it back to him, I will have all the blessings in the world.

[1 : 16] If I would only take that \$100 and put it in this envelope, he would send me back a handkerchief that would increase my faith and my life would be better.

And it was, oh, there's this, a bit of a scam, and I thought it was kind of funny, we had a laugh about it. I couldn't get off the mailing list for well over a year. I don't even know how it worked. I think I threatened, like, if you keep this up, I'm going to talk to my MP, there's legislation about it.

Anyways, it was like, it was the hardest thing ever. But this faith healer, the big push, I mean, apart from the kind of cronyism, was if you only had a little more faith.

If you only had a bit more faith, life would go okay. If you only had a little bit more faith, the problems would be fine. If only you had a little bit more faith and slipped me 100, financial issues would be no more.

It was always the onus on me to have a little bit more faith. I'll confess to you that that stuff drives me crazy, and I knee-jerk reaction to it, so much so that anybody or any time that I hear, hey, listen, Dana, you just have to have a little more faith.

[2 : 30] Or whenever there's some issue, just, you know, brother, sister, have a bit more faith. I mean, at best, I kind of cringe. At worst, it frustrates me so much.

And I think it frustrates me for a couple reasons. The first reason is that life, I mean, listen, I am not of riper years, but I've lived long enough to know that life isn't easy.

Life isn't, it's not a walk in the park. Life is tough. Life is tough. And even if you have a lot of blessing, even if you are in a season of, I mean, you just feel like you are, nothing could go wrong, eventually something goes wrong.

Eventually, some kind of depressed feelings hit you. A loved one suffers. You suffer. Your ideals get crushed under the weight of reality.

Life is pretty tough. So when you then offer somebody a little kind of trivial, have faith, it trivializes the difficulty of life and the reality of life.

[3 : 41] And it bothers me. It really does. I mean, how does one even muster up more faith? Do you pray and squint your eyes that much harder? Do you clench your fists when you're talking to God?

God, I believe, I believe. At what point do you put enough faith in kind of like a tank in your spirit to hit critical mass so that when God sees you, oh, he has enough faith, my ear is attentive to him, my ear is attentive to her.

I mean, what does it mean to have enough faith? If it's to pray more, I mean, basically any parent with a young kid is doomed. We don't have time for anything. So how do we increase in faith?

How do we increase in faith in the face of uncertainty from every facet of our life, potentially every facet of our life, throughout our life?

What is it? What does it mean to have more faith? What is faith? And we're continuing our summer series on the real Jesus, real miracles. I read earlier Mark 4, 35 to 41.

[4 : 56] And this is a miracle, a nature miracle that Jesus does. And Mark writes it not as an allegory, not as a myth, but he writes it as history.

And we'll get into maybe some of the objections to that. But as much as it is a nature miracle, it's actually also about faith. This is a passage about faith.

See, the disciples clearly are lacking it. Jesus scolds them at the end of his miracle. But this touches on faith.

What it is, who it's in, how to have it. What does it mean? And in this passage, we'll see that faith is hand in glove with understanding who Jesus is.

Faith is tied to a proper understanding of who Jesus is. So it is important that we get Jesus right. And this passage helps us understand Jesus in three ways.

[5 : 57] We understand that Jesus is fully man and fully God. We understand that Jesus is the strong man. We say the strong man. We'll get to what that means.

And that Jesus cannot be approached with indifference. So those three things. That Jesus is fully man, fully God. That Jesus is the strong man. That Jesus cannot be approached with indifference. So the first one. Jesus is being fully man, fully God. Up to this point in the narrative, Jesus has excellent success in his ministry. He is in the Galilee region.

And he is healing people. And he is casting out demons. He is teaching very, very authoritatively. He has a big following around him.

And he is causing the religious elites and the political elites to hold court with one another. Figure out how to kill him. He's causing a stir. Some people think it's a great stir.

[7 : 00] Other people, a terrible stir. But he is causing a stir. He is being successful. He is finding success in his ministry. Now I'm not sure whether Jesus is an introvert or an extrovert. Or if he is like the majority of us.

He is a bit of both. Who knows? I'm not sure. But the point is that he is surrounded by throngs of people. And he is exhausted. He gets in the boat.

Look with me in verse 35 of chapter 4. And he says to his disciples, let us go across to the other side. And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was.

And other boats were with him. If we go down to verse 38. But he was in the stern during this big storm, asleep on the cushion. This is a giant storm.

So much of a giant storm that the disciples are fearing for their lives. And Jesus is passed out asleep. Either Jesus has excellent, excellent supernatural sleeping ability.

[8 : 00] Or he is exhausted. If you think, how can you fall asleep in a small boat? I mean, this is not a cruise ship. Where there's a nice suite that he's in.

Where 15 foot waves feel like, I don't know, a tiny rumble. No, he's in a small fishing vessel. That maybe holds a dozen people. Maybe a dozen and a half people.

And there's a huge storm. I mean, there must be spray all over him. And he's sleeping through it. I've been so tired. And, I mean, people that know me laugh at me. But I can sleep through a lot.

I mean, I'll sleep. I've slept through World Cup matches and NBA final matches. I've slept behind the wheel. Like, when you get tired enough, it doesn't really matter where you are.

You can just sleep wherever. So it doesn't surprise me that Jesus has passed out in a ship during a storm. And he's remained asleep.

[8 : 55] This tells me that Jesus is indeed fully man. We, as Christians, we can, we figure that Jesus is actually full.

Like, he is God. We're cool with that. We can talk about Jesus is God in the flesh. But we get a bit uncomfortable when we talk about Jesus being fully man. But the Christian faith and the Bible teaches that Jesus isn't 50% man and 50% God.

He's not 40 or 60 or, you know, whatever that ratio is. He's 100% man and 100% God. That means as 100% man, he goes through the ups and downs of life as you or I do.

That he experiences fatigue as you or I do. I can relate to him of being exhausted from being around people. He fell asleep.

He was tired. And this is an important point for us because it means that he can relate to us. He can fully and completely relate to us.

[9 : 58] That means he can relate to our emotions, to our physical limitations, to our inability to push through sometimes.

There's only so much energy and strength you can muster. And then it's like, all right, I'm tapping out. I'm done. Give me an hour. Give me a day.

Give me a week. I'm done. And he can relate to this. He is fully man. And this is wonderful because this means that Jesus isn't sitting in a snooty ivory tower looking down on us.

That he is somehow other than us. But he can relate to us. He knows what it's like to be betrayed. He knows what it's like in this situation to be tired.

He knows what it's like to feel grief and to feel pain. Also to feel joy. The good parts of life as well. But he is completely a man.

[11 : 03] And he knows what I am going through. What I have gone through. What you are going through. What you have gone through. What a wonderful thing that he can relate.

But like I said, he's not just 100% man. He's 100% God. The waves here are absolutely overcoming this small shipping vessel.

At least four of the disciples are seasoned fishermen. Maybe they've encountered a type of storm like this in the past or not.

We have no idea. It would be speculation. But seasoned pilots, I mean, they don't get scared easily. But these disciples are stricken with fear.

There is a serious storm afflicting this ship. And Jesus wakes up. And he simply says, peace, be still. And the sea is calm.

[12 : 11] Jesus doesn't say some sort of incantation. He doesn't make a sacrifice to Poseidon. He doesn't pray to the sea God or appease some kind of sea monster.

As if those things existed. He spoke. And what we have here is this vivid illustration of Jesus doing something that only God himself could do.

Him speaking and commanding nature is exactly what we see in the opening chapter of Genesis. When God creates. He speaks. And that the heavens are formed.

The earth is formed. He speaks. Also, throughout the scriptures. Only God himself can control the seas.

The waters. In Psalm 33 verse 7. It says, He, God, he gathers the waters of the sea as a heap. He puts the deeps in storehouses.

[13 : 13] Psalm 65 verse 7 says, He who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of the waves, the tumult of the peoples. And in Psalm 104. And these are just a couple.

There's many more instances where God is the one who is controlling the seas. Psalm 104 says, You covered it. Talking about the earth. He's talking about the flood here.

You covered it with the deep as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they fled. At the sound of your thunder they took flight. Flight. Jesus isn't doing a simple miracle.

He is declaring to his disciples that he himself is God. That he himself is God. So not only is he fully man.

He can relate to us in the most intimate way. In the most personal way. But he is God the creator. Capable of stilling any storm. Capable of overcoming any obstacle.

[14 : 15] The creator of the heavens and earth. The second thing is besides Jesus being fully man, fully God.

Is that he is the strong man. So this links to the whole issue of the sea. In the ancient world. The sea. I mean Greeks and Jews alike.

The sea was the place where chaos exists. Where it was a picture of evil. Of the unknown. The deep. The dark. Chaotic. Nobody can withstand a chaotic storm.

So the sea became this picture of evil. Earlier in just the chapter before chapter 4.

In verse 27. Jesus is accused of being demon possessed himself. By the scribes and the Pharisees. Or just the scribes rather. And he responds to them.

[15 : 13] And this is what he says. In verse 27. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods. Unless he first binds the strong man.

Then indeed he may plunder his house. We don't have the time to deep dive into this section.

Chapter 3. But just take it from me. I mean we can talk about it after. But take it from me that when Jesus is talking about the strong man.

And binding the strong man. He is saying that no demonic force. No evil force can overcome him. That he is the ultimate strong man.

It's interesting that Jesus rebukes the wind and the waves. And the word that Mark uses for rebuke. Is the same word that he uses in chapter 1 and chapter 3. To describe what Jesus does when he rebukes demons out of possessed people. So it's not just that God is declaring that.

[16:10] Or Jesus is God declaring his deity by controlling nature. But he is also declaring that he is the ultimate force in the entire universe.

And not the greatest of demonic forces can overcome him. Immediately after this story. George will preach on this I think at the end of August.

I don't know which Sunday. But near the end of August. Chapter 5 of Mark verses 1 to 20.

Immediately after Jesus calms this storm. As he declares that he is God.

And that he declares that he is the most powerful in the universe. He encounters a demonic man. The Gerizim demoniac.

He calms a storm that is chaotic. Brings it to peace. And the very next scene. He encounters a man that's so strong.

[17:06] That it says that the shackles that they tried to shackle him with. Wouldn't hold him. And that Jesus simply spoke. And the people were astonished.

It says because he was clothed. Sitting and in his right mind. That he takes this chaotic man. And brings him to peace. So it's this wonderful picture of who Jesus is.

We're starting to see who this real Jesus is unraveling. For us. But just a quick pause. Because. I just said that there's demonic forces at work. And I'm not talking as if they're allegorical. I'm putting forward to you that they're real. And if you're like me.

And I truly mean this. You struggle with that. Sure it says it in the Bible. But is there really demonic forces. If you're new here. And you're just like. This is where I check out.

[18:07] Sit in your seat. Entertain me. We're going to. I'm going to talk a bit about this. But if you're a Christian. Consider this. The Bible says we have three enemies.

The world. The flesh. And the devil. But more. I mean. I'm saying. I would guess. More of you are like me. That you're okay with talking about the world.

And you're okay to talk about the flesh. But to talk about the devil. But yet the scriptures never tell us to ignore. The devil.

Or demons. Or demonic influences. It says actually. Not to. To ignore them. But to acknowledge them. But to stand firm. To trust in God. When they are.

Around. When we encounter them. In whatever way we might encounter them. But going back to the whole apologetics. Piece about. The demons really exist. I would just. I would just.

[19:04] Tell you right off the bat. I cannot prove to you that demons exist. I can't say. Exhibit A. Here is a demon. Notice his wings. His pitchfork. It's not red.

It's actually black. You know. Like. No tail. It's. I can't. It's not like going to the zoo. I can't prove to you that demons exist. Or that Satan exists. But the vast majority of the world.

The Middle East. Asia. Africa. Latin America. First Nations. First Nations here in Canada. The majority of the people. In the world.

Believe that there is a spiritual realm. That there are good forces. And that there are evil forces. I'm not saying they share the same religion. But that there is. This spiritual reality.

That's just as real as a physical reality. We just don't see it. But us Westerners. We're smarter than them. We are moderns. And we say prove it.

[20:01] And the criteria of proof that we say is legitimate. Could never possibly prove that there is a spiritual world. So the illiterate superstitious in the world.

I mean at best we you know. We treat them like a kid brother. That's okay. You know. It's nice that you believe that. But at worst. You know. We call them names. They're superstitious.

They don't believe. How can you believe in this? Like don't you know that science is a thing? Like. There's no supernatural. What we see is what we get. We're empiricists. You know.

The funny thing about that. Is that us Westerners. Just spend almost three billion dollars. Going to the theaters to watch Avengers Endgame. We have spent tons of money and time.

Trying to get to Middle Earth. Engaging in Middle Earth. And enjoying Hogwarts. Almost too much. Carlton has a Quidditch. I don't know.

[21 : 03] League. Not just like a team. Like a whole league. Bizarre. I mean. We love the supernatural. Except that. We've relegated it. To fiction. But we don't treat it just as fiction.

Because we are. We embrace it with our time. And our money. And our energy. And I've just put to you. That. Us moderns. That don't believe. In the supernatural world.

I would say that. I'm not as convinced. I think we have this eternal itch. This. This. This. Underlying belief.

Subconscious. I don't know. That there is something. Out there. That is more than just this physical world. And I would just put it to you. That you need to consider that. That it's not just.

For entertainment's sake. There is something obsessive. About our desire. For fantasy. And for sci-fi. For otherworldliness. By the way.

[22 : 01] I'm not somehow. Saying that. There are. Mutants. Among us. Or wizards. And witches. From Hogwarts. I'm not saying that. But my goodness. We. We think it would be pretty cool.

If there was. Jesus shows himself. To be truly man. To be truly God. To be fully man. To be fully God.

And the ultimate power. In the universe. Prevailing over. True. Spiritual forces. Both evil. And good. And he.

Shows his strength. In front of his disciples. Mark writes. In such a way. That whenever Jesus. Does a miracle. He does it. In a way.

That forces his disciples. To react. The disciples. Can never remain neutral. When they're around Jesus. And what Jesus does. They're already.

[22 : 56] They're always forced. To make a decision. Towards belief. Towards faith. To change their worldview. To change their thinking. And this is exactly.

What we see here. And this is exactly. As we read this. What the text is forcing us. To do. So. Jesus.

This text shows us. That Jesus is fully God. And fully man. This text shows us. That Jesus is the true strong man. And this text shows us. That Jesus cannot be approached.

With indifference. So at the beginning of the sermon. I talked about how. I'm not a big fan of pat answers. To just have a little faith. When difficult situations arrive.

But as it turns out. This is kind of what Jesus is saying. Look with me. In chapter four. In verse 40. After Jesus calms the wind.

[23 : 53] And the waves. He says to his disciples. Sorry. Verse 40. He said to his disciples. Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?

You know. The disciples reaction. Is very. Is a very natural reaction. Pushed. To. The brink of death. Whether it's. Real or imagined.

If you think you're dying. You react in a very. In not necessarily. A rational way. Kind of freak out. I think that's a completely.

Okay. Reaction. The disciples here. Are. Freaking out. Because they think. They're going to die. And instead of saying. To Jesus.

In a calmed. Rational way. Jesus. There is a storm. We know you're strong. Please. Help us out. Rather. They're. They're. They're. Freaking out.

[24 : 51] Don't you care. Do you not give a rip? We're dying. Wake up. They're. They're. They are treating Jesus. With.

With almost. Contempt. A very natural reaction. And Jesus responds. That they need to have. Faith. And here's a bit of the.

The. The. The issue. Is that if you are like me. To a certain degree. You expect. That following Jesus. Comes with its perks. And. And it does.

It really does. But the perks. As if. I'm following Jesus. I'm living. A godly. Upright life. I will have more prosperity. I will probably have more health.

I won't speak in these terms. But that will be my sentiment. I will have more bounty. There will be more goodness in my life. There will be more. There will be more. There will be more. There will be more.

[25 : 45] More. And that. Although I might say. That my hope is in heaven. Really my hope is here on earth. But Jesus here.

Is. Is saying the opposite. The real lasting hope. Is for heaven. When all the wrongs. Will be made right. And the pain. And the sorrow. Will be no more. See the thing is.

We as Christians. Have this wonderful prayer. That Jesus taught us to pray. And in it. It says. Lord may your kingdom come. May your will be done. On earth.

As it is. In heaven. But we act. Like earth is heaven. We want earth to be heaven. And earth. Is not heaven.

It can't. Hold. The weight. Of our hope. The peoples. And the places. And the things. In our lives. That we put our hope in. Could never.

[26 : 42] Never. Withstand the weight. Of. Of. Of our. Eternal hope. Because things decay. Things rust. Bodies break down.

Friendships. Disintegrate. Money dries up. Bad things happen. I mean. You go on. And you go on. And you go on. And you go on.

So Jesus here. He doesn't. He doesn't. Hear me out. He doesn't. He doesn't calm the storm. For his disciples. He leads them into one.

Make no mistake. Jesus. Calms the storms. In our lives. He does. But Jesus. Isn't a rabbit's foot. He isn't a good luck charm.

He isn't a genie. That you rub. The lamp. And he pops out. And he gives you three wishes. He's not that at all. But he is the one that leads.

[27 : 46] You into the storm. In verse 35. It's Jesus leading the disciples into the storm. But notice that he's in the boat with them. He doesn't lead us into the storm.

And then abandon us. And then say. Where is your faith? Stupid people. Idiot people. I have no patience for you. He's in the boat.

His life is at risk as well. The disciples are fearing for their lives. And then the storm is subdued.

And you think that they'd be happy. But the text says the opposite. In verse 41. It says this. After Jesus calms the wind and the waves.

After he asks them. Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? Verse 41. And they the disciples were filled with great fear. And said to one another.

[28 : 44] Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? If they had fear before. The emphasis in the text is that they have fear squared. It's like.

It's double the fear. But it's fear to the exponent of fear. They're. They're. They're. Almost infinitely more afraid. After Jesus subdues the storm. Than. When the storm was raging.

And this is a good thing. Hold on a second. I thought fear is a bad thing. Fear leads to all sorts of different racism. Fear leads to.

Bad behavior. Fear can lead to. To squashing people in wars. And. And. And. Abuse. Fear can lead to all sorts of bad things. And doesn't the bible say that. Perfect love casts out.

All fear. So why is fear in here a good thing? The fear. In. The scripture here.

[29 : 40] Is this recognition of who Jesus truly is. That he is. Fully man. But fully God. That he is the creator. But also that he's the strong man.

That he is. Completely other than us. Infinitely more powerful than us. Infinitely greater than us.

That he. If he wanted to. Could squash us.

That it is a fearful thing. To be in the presence. Of God. It's good to recognize who he is. But it's important also. To recognize that he is.

And to remember that he is fully. Man. That he. Relates to us. That he has love for us. That he gives us grace. So if you're not a Christian.

I would love to. To talk to you about. Becoming a Christian. But understand. That there is. A relationship. That you will enter into. With. The fearful.

[30 : 40] The awesome. The terrifying. God. Of the universe. But the God of the universe. That is so intimate. And loving. That will be with you.

In the boat. That asks you. To trust in him. So Jesus leads the disciples. And leads us. Into all sorts of storms. And why?

It's because. He wants our hearts. He wants our faith. To grow. Often. Our faith doesn't grow. When things are going. Swimmily. Our faith grows.

When we are desperate. And realizing. That we don't have it. In us. We can't buy it. From a store.

The. The. Some kind of problem. Solving ability.

To get through. The difficult times. So he puts us. In situations. Lovingly. While being. In the situation. With us. To expand.

[31 : 35] Our faith. And he gives us. The ability. And strength. To expand it. But if you are here. And you are like. The disciples. Who say.

Do you not care. That we are perishing. But maybe you're saying. To Jesus. Do you not care. That. The stress of work. Is crushing. Me. Do you not care. That I.

Am struggling. Through my marriage. Do you. Not care. That I am. Unhappy. In life. Do you not care. That all. Is about to be lost. The same.

Jesus. Is saying. To you. That he can. Take care. Of the situation. That you are to have. Trust in him. Because he is able. Precisely. Because he is God.

Incarnate. Precisely. Because he is the creator. Of heaven. The heavens and earth. Precisely. Because. He is who he says he is. Therefore.

[32 : 34] We can't get Jesus wrong. A proper understanding. Of who Jesus is. Will lead us to proper faith. In him. And I'm not necessarily. Talking about a saving faith.

Because ultimately. God. He saves us. And it's not the degree. Of our faith. That saves us. It's the object. Christ. That saves us. But the faith. As we are. Are refined.

By him. As we grow. In him. The bible calls this term. Sanctification. But. Just think of it like. You are this wonderful. Kind of mix. Of.

Silver. But. A bunch of other. Impure. Metals. And it's all kind of. Fused together. And God. Wants to purify you. And the only way. To purify you. Is to put you through.

The furnace. Furnaces are hot. He will burn. Parts off of you. But what will be the result? You will be more.

[33 : 30] And more like him. Walking in more. And more freedom. Precisely because. You. Are. Made for eternity. You're not made. For this temporal life. So when we.

Start living. In an ordered way. The way God. Ordered us to live. We will live. In freedom. Not necessarily. Bounty. Not necessarily. Physical. Health.

Not necessarily. With. The best relationships. Ever. But as. A child of God. As. An eternal being. I'm not saying.

Hear me when I say this. I'm not saying that this world doesn't matter. It matters a lot. But let us not. Get things mixed up. And treat the temporal world. As if it was.

Eternal. And treat the eternal God. As if. He is just. A way to. Solve our temporal problems. God gives us. God gives us more grace.

[34 : 34] He gives us grace. Because he truly loves us. And he made a way for us to know him. Jesus dies in our place. And rises again. He draws us to himself. By the Holy Spirit.

So that we. May be in full communion. With God. The Father. God. The Son. God. The Holy Spirit. God. But again.

I will say to you. Do you have a proper understanding of Jesus? Turn with me one last time to. Verse. 26.

Or sorry. Verse 36. It says this. After Jesus says. Let's go to the other side. And leaving the crowd. The disciples took him with them. In the boat. Just as he was.

You need to take Jesus. Just as he is. And that might be frustrating. Because. The very idea.

[35 : 28] Of believing in something supernatural. Is incongruent. With the way you think. But I would say. Labor. To figure out. Who this Jesus really is. Through the scriptures.

Labor. By asking questions. And seeking truth. Biblical truth. Labor. To have your mind. Conformed. To the biblical worldview. Not. The western. Modern worldview.

Labor. To figure out. Who this Jesus really is. And just like the disciples. When he reveals himself. To you. You can't remain indifferent. I'll close with this.

It is likely. That. The eyewitness account. For. Mark's gospel. In this story. In particular. Is. The apostle.

Peter. And Peter. Peter. Writes about. What we've talked about. In the opening. Few verses. Of his. First epistle. So. If you have a bible.

[36 : 28] I'm. I'm. I'm. I'm. I'm. Going to turn to. First. Peter. Three. Verses. Nine. And this is what we'll close with. First. Peter. One. Verses. Three to nine. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

According to his great mercy. He has caused us to be born again to a living hope. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance that is imperishable.

Undefined. Unfading. Kept in heaven for you. Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you rejoice. Though now for a little while. If necessary you have been grieved by various trials. So that the tested genuineness of your faith.

More precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire. May be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[37 : 29] Verse eight. Though you have not seen him. You love him. Though you do. Though you do not now see him. You believe in him. And rejoice with joy that is inexpressible.

And filled with glory. Obtaining the outcome of your faith. The salvation of your souls. Please stand with me. Heavenly Father I thank you so much that you sent your son on earth.

Fully man. Fully God. To live this life. The ups and the downs. The highs and the lows. The emotional difficulties.

The physical difficulties. The spiritual struggles as well. To be tempted in every way. But be without sin. But to know us intimately.

And I thank you that you are wooing us. You are drawing us. You are gathering us to a proper understanding of who your son is. And that proper understanding cannot leave us neutral.

[38 : 36] Lord I pray today for Christians and non-Christians. For people that have been church goers their whole life. For people that are super new to the faith.

Or just still exploring. Or completely indifferent. That we would consider who Jesus truly is. That this miracle story. Is a window into the nature and character of the incarnate God.

Fully man. Fully God. Creator of heavens and earth. The strong man indeed. I pray that you will help us to encounter him. That you will draw us. That you will help us have our eyes open to the spiritual realities.

Conform our minds to the biblical truth. Help us to withstand and to resist the world. The flesh and the devil. Lord we ask this in Jesus mighty name.

And Lord for anybody here that doesn't know you through Jesus. Your son by the power of the Holy Spirit. Will you please do a work in their heart. Pray these things in Jesus name.