

Acts 10 "Jesus is the Only Way to God"

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[0 : 0 0] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's pray. Father, Father, your Word sometimes is very un-Canadian, and we're Canadians, and we have problems when your Word is very un-Canadian. We want to be Canadians, and we want to follow Jesus.

So Father, we ask that you help us to fall in love and be enchanted with the beauty of what your Word is going to say to us this morning, that we can live as confident Canadians, but even more importantly, that we can have a great confidence in Jesus and in the gospel, and in your great love for us. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

And once again, this isn't a vain moment. I am starting my timer, or I might preach for three hours. No, I wouldn't. That won't happen. You might have gathered from my prayer, if you were listening to my prayer, that the topic we're going to look at, basically what happens is, the Bible text today is one of the texts that says that Jesus is the only way to God. There you go. You fall asleep for the rest of the sermon. That's what the text says. Jesus is the only way to God. And if you're here sort of as a bit of a seeker, trying to figure out whether you're going to stop being a Christian, whether you're going to become a Christian, if you're online and you're sort of curious about things, as we all know, saying that Jesus is the only way to God is very un-Canadian. And what you need to know, if you're sort of trying to figure out what Christianity is, that a lot of Canadian Christians are uncomfortable with this idea. It doesn't say we're going to deny it, but that we're uncomfortable with it. And that's because it's so un-Canadian. So we're going to look at this text together. We're going to walk towards it. And just one of the things I want you to know is that I don't sort of think down,

[3 : 1 5] I don't sort of sit down in a coffee shop and think of what 10 sermons can I do over the next 10 weeks that are really controversial. And I'll pick those texts and I'll just do those controversial texts. One of the things that we do, which is unusual in Ottawa, is that we preach through books of the Bible. And I just sort of have to handle the text as it comes. So this is like a really good way. I mean, this is actually in our private life we should be reading the Bible. And it's really good for those trying to figure out the Christian faith. I'm not going to hide anything from you.

You know, this is just what the Bible says. We're going to look at it. We're going to walk towards it. And even though it's very un-Canadian, I hope I'm able to show you by the end of the sermon that this is something that we Christians should be enchanted by and just see the profound beauty and coherence of this doctrine. So let's look. We're going through Acts, the book of Acts, and it's going to be Acts chapter 10 this morning. And just as we're turning to it in Acts chapter 10, if you don't have a Bible of your own, the text most of the time, I think, if not always, will be up on the screen. It's really good to have your own Bibles. It's good to have paper Bibles as well in the market if you want. And as I've said before, Acts, the book of Acts is an eyewitness, a history of the first 30 some odd years of the Jesus movement. And it's written by a fellow who's an eyewitness for some of the events and everything else is based on eyewitness testimony written when eyewitnesses are alive. And so this is, and what's just happened before this is that there have been a couple of very significant conversions in the early history, the early history of the Christian faith. And a lot of Christians just are unhappy about this doctrine. So that's just, we cry inwardly when, outwardly when we have to talk about it. So if you can hear, there's a kid crying, missing his daddy.

One other thing, by the way, you know, one of the things that we should pray for, we should pray for certain types of problems. A lot of people think you should pray that you don't have any problems. We should pray for problems. One problem to have is too many kids. Like, wouldn't that be a nice problem to have? Disrupting things? Like, that's what we should pray for, certain types of problems. Anyway, back to the text. So let's look at this. There's been a couple of conversions. There's been some significant miracles, which I talked about last week. And here's how the story goes.

At Caesarea, there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian cohort. A devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. Now just sort of pause here for a couple of things to help you figure out, you know, what's going on here. Here's a couple of things that are going on. The first thing that you need to know is that this story is going to take place primarily in Caesarea. And Caesarea is a pagan center. It's not a Jewish center. And it's, in a sense, the capital for what we would now call the Middle East. It's the capital city. It's where the Roman governor lives and administers the affairs.

That's what Caesarea is. So it's a pagan community. Cornelius is a pagan name back then, a Roman name. So he's a Roman citizen, almost definitely, and a pagan. And he's a centurion. And that means he has, in some ways, here's where the gap goes. Centurion is a very significant position because he's looking after about 100 men. And, you know, it's all right for generals, or I mean, they didn't call them generals, but for people way up to make these decisions. But it's centurions, the guys on the ground, that are actually enforcing things. Rome is an occupying power, from the Jewish perspective, pagans who've conquered the promised land. And it's guys like the centurions that actually enforce things, right? The other thing about him is he's roughly the, in the Roman world back then, it's like a lot of places in the world today, there's very little, a very small middle class. So there's a small number of very wealthy people. And there's a very, very large number of people who are quite poor, living hand to mouth. And there's a very small middle class, and Cornelius would be part of that small middle class. And to figure out sort of a bit of an analogy is not perfect, but I don't know what the average salary of a corporal is in the

[7 : 39] Canadian Armed Forces. But if you took that salary and multiplied it by five, that's how much the centurion makes. In a world at that time, where a corporal's pay would have been viewed as very, very well paid. So he's a man of substance. He's part of the occupying power. And he'd be part of that power that he would be seeing Jewish people face to face all the time and enforcing things.

The other thing about him is that for some reason, we never find out the reason why, he's become enchanted or infatuated with Yahweh, with the Jewish God, and has started to pray to the Jewish God, and to be kind to the Jewish people. But he's still a pagan, as we're going to see later on. He's still very much a pagan. And it's really important for us to understand that in the pagan world, the Jews and then the Christians were exceptionally weird. Because everybody who's anybody, anybody with half a brain, anybody who knows anything would know that there are many gods. That's just obvious. It's as obvious as the sun rising, the wind blowing, that you drink water. It's just obvious to all levels of intellectuals and priests, for everybody except this small number of Jews and Christians, that there are many gods. So it might very well be that Cornelius has become a bit enchanted with Yahweh, so he prays to Yahweh. But it also wouldn't at all be wrong that the next day he would pray to some Roman god or goddess. That's who he is. And so will the story continue? So this is who he is, verse 3. About the ninth hour of the day, Cornelius clearly saw a vision, in a vision, an angel of God come in and say to him, Cornelius. And Cornelius stared at the angel in terror and said, what is it, Lord? And the angel said to him, your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God, and now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one

Simon, a tanner whose house is by the sea. And when the angel spoke to him and had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him.

And having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. Now just sort of pause here for a second as well. So one of the things, there's lots that's going on in this story, and what you're going to see is that visions and angels play an important role in it. If you go back and listen to my sermon last week, or listen to some of my earlier sermons, I've defended the idea of the miracle, miraculous.

I don't have time to do that today. You're just going to have to, you know, take it for what it's worth for the moment. But I do want to emphasize, though, that everything in this story is trying to communicate that this is what actually happened. In fact, actually, if you go back and look at it, I talked about this at length last week, but Cornelius is mentioned, where he lives is mentioned, his rank is mentioned, his regiment is mentioned, you know, Simon is mentioned by name. In fact, you're going to see in a moment that just from the mere description of Simon, who has another name, and Simon the tanner, the soldiers are going to be able to travel 50 kilometers away and find him.

[10:55] So the story and everything in the whole story is trying to communicate this is what actually happened, even though for many Canadians, it's completely preposterous. I'm not going to try to defend it, because there's a bigger thing that we need to look at. But I just want to say it's one of the features of the story. I'm just going to accept it. And I, not I'm just going to accept it. I actually believe it's true, but that comes up towards the end of the sermon. But there are lots of visions and everything. The other thing about it is just, and this is an encouragement for all of you when you're reading books like Acts and the Gospels, is just to remember that for Christians who've read this many times, and we believe it's the Word of God, we sort of see the obviousness of the response. But you need to ask yourself and put yourself, if you're trying to enter into the world, that the response to this isn't obvious. So for instance, there'd be many, many Canadians today that if they had a vision like this, they wouldn't act on it. They'd think it was nuts. They'd think they had to go for therapy.

They'd wonder whether they needed to take some medication, whether something like schizophrenia was beginning to happen to them. That's how many Canadians would respond to it. And another thing about it is many Canadians would just say, why on earth would you even respond to it? Like, you know, if somebody tried to frighten you, you shouldn't do what they say. Like, that's nuts, right? So we have become accustomed to these responses, but I'm not going to go to it every time. But every time there's this type of a command, there's other ways of responding to it.

In this particular story, the response is, in a sense, always the right response. And we need to learn from it and sort of have it into our minds. So anyway, Cornelius has this vision, unexpected.

He sends people to Joppa to get Peter. What happens next? Well, once again, there's going to be visions. Look at verse 9. The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about noon to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat.

But while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being led down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him, rise, Peter, kill and eat.

[13 : 24] But Peter said, by no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. I'm just sort of pause here for a second. This word common is a bit of an unfortunate translation.

It's a literal translation. But the problem with common, if the translators would ask my advice, I would say the problem is it doesn't have the right connotation, at least to Canadians. It sounds as if the difference is between common and elitist. As if, oh my, I wouldn't have McDonald's french fries.

I mean, you need to go and have these frits, you know, with a special mayo and come from some type of organic potatoes or something like that, you know, cooked in some special oil with some rare seasonings. I wouldn't have something like McDonald's fries. That's not what it means at all.

That's why it's an unfortunate translation. Basically, the two words you're trying to say that there's, that the food, and on one level, we can enter into this a little bit. If you watch cooking shows, food isn't just food. Food tells stories. Food is connected to cultural identity. It's a big issue if you read many immigrant stories about the clash that immigrant children can have when they bring immigrant food to school, and the school kids consider it smelly. So food isn't just food.

And in this particular world, what it's trying to get at is that there is this cultural and religious and ethnic divide, and it's being maintained partially by food and by partially connections with hospitality and how you get along with people. And that's what's going on here in the text.

[15 : 04] And I'll give you another example of why that's actually an important thing, but let's just read two more verses. Verse 15, and the voice came to Peter again a second time. What God has made clean, do not call common, right? So don't call it as something that's going to ritually separate you from God or from other people. This happened three times, and the thing was taken up to heaven at once.

Now, here's sort of a big pause to enter into the story. We Canadians who sort of have a bit of a double mind around this, on one hand, whether we realize it or not, Canadians have been profoundly affected by this story. And we don't realize it. You know, once again, if you haven't read, I can't remember the guy's name, the guy who wrote Dominion, Tom Holland, you should read Tom Holland's book, or at least a summary of it, about all these things that he thought were just reasonable, he didn't realize it actually come from Christianity. And so the idea of not having divisions around food and all, that's a very, very Christian idea, even if Canadians don't realize that they heard it from somebody, you heard it from somebody, you heard it from somebody, and, you know, 50 times of hearing back, it's because somebody read the Bible. And then it started to make people realize that's, that's like a good idea. On the other hand, we live at a cultural moment where divisions are escalating and deepening. And the chattering class in Canada thinks that divisions are very good. They don't, they don't, they're not as bald as that, but they fundamentally think that they're very good. Separate graduation ceremonies, safe spaces, a variety of things.

And, and we can also get a little bit of a taste for this in an, in another type of phenomenon. Just imagine for a second, if you have a, maybe it's your mom who's, you know, now wanting to, you know, she has to remarry, maybe she's a widow or, you know, divorced and she's remarrying, or maybe it's your, your daughter or your granddaughter or your, your best friend or whatever. And, and you hear that they're dating somebody and then you find out that they're, they voted for Trump.

And you say, good grief, you can't date that guy. Now, just to switch the political thing, maybe you're one of those conservatives who doesn't refer to Trudeau as Trudeau, but calls him Trudy.

There are a lot of people like that out there in Canada. And you'd say, what, he's a, he works for Trudy? How could you date that guy? Like, it should have nothing to do with him. And you could just multiply the whole, the whole, the whole range of things, you know, like their view on trans issues or even things to do with food, you know, like if you're really committed vegan and you find out that they like hunting, hunting, how can you date somebody who hunts? That's completely abhorrent.

[17 : 42] Like, don't have anything to do with him. And, and people could, you just know, many people would get very hot under the collar. So we understand divides. Okay. We understand divides. And the, one of the big issues, not one of the, one of the big points of this story, if you could put it up as this, if you put it up on the screen, the Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost. That's, Jesus says that in Luke. The Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost and no racial, linguistic, cultural, economic, sexual, religious, political, ethnic, caste, or educational divide will stop him. That's the point of the, one of the main points of this story.

Okay. The Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost. And, and the, the early Christians are just sharing the gospel with Jews or semi-Jews. And, and that's not good enough for Christ. And that's one of the reasons why throughout this whole story, you see that God is driving the action. He's driving the action through visions, through angels, through word. He's driving the action. He's pushing Peter out of his comfort zone across a massive divide. Why? Because no racial, linguistic, cultural, economic, sexual, religious, political, ethnic, caste, or educational divide will stop him from seeking the lost to save them. That's what this, one of the main ideas that this story is trying to communicate.

And that's why it's being driven by visions. Because God needs to push these people, just as he sometimes really has to push us. So how does Peter respond to all of this? Well, let's look, verse 17.

Verse 17. And now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what this vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate, and called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was lodging there.

And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them. So, see, once again, God is pushing all this. He's done something to Cornelius, and then he's timed it.

[20 : 01] God has timed it so that just as these men are on the edge of the house, Peter has these visions. He's perplexed. He hears the knocking of the door. The Spirit says, you've got to go with these guys.

So God is driving the action. Verse 21. And Peter went down to the men and said, I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming? And they said, Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear what you have to say. Now, just imagine, by the way, if somebody came to our house and said something like that, we'd laugh, right? But it's all part of God's pushing the event along, that Peter doesn't just laugh at it. He's been pushed by God. So Peter, verse 23, invited them in to be his guests. Now, the next day he rose and went away with them and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. Now, just sort of pause before I go anything any further. I'm taking, this is a very long story by New Testament standards, 48 verses, but I want to read all of the story because one of my great hopes is not that people remember what

I say, but remember what the Bible says. I want to have, I want to be used by God to help you encounter the word yourself and encounter Jesus yourself. That's why I go through and read this story, even though there's going to be repetition. Anyway, continue verse 24. And on the following day, they entered Caesarea, Cornelius was expecting them and called together his relatives and close friends. So one of the things that's really significant just to notice here is that it's not that, it's not that Peter is told just to stay in Jerusalem and God was going to, people, pagans have to come to him to hear about the Christian faith. This is a very important message.

It's, it's why we're, we are here today because missionaries understood texts like this and went great distances to bring the gospel to our ancestors. And Peter is going into the pagan capital where, not where he's at home, but where Cornelius is at home and he's being driven there.

And verse 25, when Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped Peter. But Peter lifted him up saying, stand up, I too am a man. You see, that's one of the reasons why whatever's going on in Cornelius, he's had a, an interest in Yahweh. But it doesn't mean he's renounced his pagan ways of thinking about Yahweh. And so Peter talks to him, verse 27, he went in and found many persons gathered. But, and Peter said to them, you yourselves know how unlawful, and that's a bit of a strong word, but it really goes against the grain of everything that, that how he'd understood what it means to be a Jewish person and even Christian. For it is for a Jew to associate with or visit anyone other than, of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any person, and here we go, common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I asked them why you sent for me. So one of the things that's happened is, you know, Peter's walking the 50 kilometers. He's thinking about the message he's heard from Cornelius. He's thinking about the vision that he's had, and he's realizing that it wasn't a vision about food, but about people. I mean, it is very, like, at a 10th level about food, but it's fundamentally about people. And, and, and by the way, I don't want to belittle it. I know I'm going to sound like a, I don't mean to sound like I'm a Pierre-Paul-Averat, I don't. But the fact is, there's lots about

[23 : 58] Canada and Ottawa that's broken. Like, there's just a lot about our city that's broken. And a lot of the brokenness is a result of a very foolish ideologies and ways of thinking. And we need to stand against them. For those of you who work in those areas, we need to stand and argue against them. There's things which are causing lots of problems in our society. You know, just for something as simple as in our, the way it now works in prosecution and other things, I, there's a prosecutor in the room, so maybe he'll correct me later on. But what I understand is, I could go out and I could smoke crack right in front of a cop, and there's nothing the cop can do about it. I could shoot up heroin in front of a cop, and there's nothing he can do about it. And there's something wrong about that idea. There's something broken. And that, that means sometimes we need to speak out against it. And some of you are in positions where you can do that. But here's the point about this.

Just as there's a point of speaking against how the centurion and some of the soldiers have dealt with the Jewish people. Peter could have a long list of very valid complaints about them.

But at the same time, where you can disagree with them in their ideas, you need to love them as a person. And you can't have that divide stop you from wanting to have them come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

That's part of the challenge of this, right? So when I'm talking about great divides, some of those things are there that we need to walk in towards those things and try to talk about them. But, you know, I am more than who I vote for.

And even if you have a Canadian public that they see their identity connected to who they vote for, or their view on trans or other things, that's not their real identity. And they need Jesus.

[25 : 47] So anyway, he asked them, why have you sent for me? So verse 30, Cornelius said, four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at three o'clock in the afternoon. And behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing and said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms have been remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon a tanner by the sea. So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now, therefore, we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by God to say. Now, you know, it's really interesting, if you try to film this or make a movie of it, it would probably be really interesting. You need to make a bit of an editorial decision. Like, is Peter a bit gobsmacked? Is he prepared? Does he go, uh, deer in a headlight? Or is he sort of ready to go? I mean, there's some, you know, you could play around with that. The Bible doesn't tell you how it is. You can imagine maybe what you would be like if you're in that situation. That would be fine. So verse 34, so Peter opened his mouth and said, now just as an aside, okay, maybe I'm the only one in the room who loves the old book of common prayer and the morning and evening prayer. Maybe there's one or two others of you, but if you read those old liturgies, there's these call and response. And one of the call and response is, oh Lord, open now my lips. And the response is, and my mouth shall, my mouth shall tell forth your praise. That open now my mouth, that comes from texts like this. That's what you're asking for in that prayer. That, that when we have an opportunity that you would open our mouths, that you would allow us to say something, even if we feel unconfident and dumb and stupid, that you'd open our mouths. Anyway, that's a bit of an aside. So Peter opened his mouth, verse 34, and said, truly, I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. Now just sort of pause here for a second. I said at the beginning of my sermon that this text is a story about how Jesus is the only way. This, these two verses seem to contradict that. And you should know that if you go into a lot, into, into different Christian chat rooms, you go reading some books in, in lots of denominations and lots of people who, I'm sorry, would say they're Christian thinkers, they would use this as a proof text to show that in fact, there you go, you can be, you can be a pagan, a Hindu, a Muslim, a Buddhist, and all these different ways are all completely acceptable to God. They're all going to lead you to God. That's what, but that's not what this verse says. It's not what it says just right here, but it's definitely not what it says in context. What it's actually saying is this. It's saying that, you know what, if you have some basic type of reverence for God and you have a desire to do what is right, you know, you're in a sense, whether you realize it or not, you're on the way to God. You might be a million miles away, a billion miles away, and you can't reach God, but you're on the way to God. And here's what you need to know. This is what the text is saying. God doesn't look and say, oh, there's a whole pile of white people here. I like black people better. He's not saying, oh, no, there's a whole pile of, you know, black people here. I like Asian people better. He's not saying, oh, look at that person. They're a trans woman.

I, you know, I don't, I'm going to just disregard them. I don't have anything to do with them. I want people with this view. Oh, look at those people there who vote liberal. I don't want anything. That's, the text is saying God doesn't look at it that way. We look at the world that way, but God doesn't look at the world that way. That's what Peter's come to understand, that beneath these other divisions, some of which may be, you know, sort of important about, around ideas, but beyond these, you know, there's, there are human beings that matter to God, and people matter to God. And since people matter to God, they should matter to us. And that's what the insight that Peter's come, that's what verse 34 and 35 is saying. It becomes more obvious when you look at verse 36 and following. And one of the other reasons, just to get to the end, the reason we know that this idea of saying that the text, these two verses are saying that you don't need to come to Jesus is by the whole point of the text is that Cornelius comes to Jesus and is baptized.

It's, it's, it's a proof text. Verse 36, as for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ. This is a, an important phrase I'm going to come back to. He is Lord of all.

He is Lord of all. And I'm going to read the next few verses fairly quick. If you're ever one, a very brief summary of how you could describe what the Christian, like the whole, what, who Jesus is and his life and his death and why he matters, you could read verses 36 to 43 and you have a brilliant summary of it just here in the Bible. You don't have to think of it yourself. You could just use verses 36 to 43. Verse 37, you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed, that's John the Baptist, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. That's a cursed death, a crucified death. But God raised him on the third day and made him to appear not to all the people, but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify, and this is a very un-Canadian phrase, that he is the one appointed by God to judge, to be the judge of the living and the dead.

That's the bad news. Well, it's actually good news. I'll get to that in a moment. To him, all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

[31 : 37] So, what's going on here in this particular text? Well, Jesus is the only way to God.

And that doesn't sound very reasonable to people, but I think it's an exceptionally reasonable idea. Here's a couple of things to consider. If you could put up the first screen, the next point, that would be very helpful.

If you think about it, when you look around and you see people around you, what you don't see is that people are somehow getting themselves so perfect and so together that they can make it with God.

Actually, sorry, I got out of my notes. We'll take a step back. Jesus is the only way to God. That's a very un-Canadian thing. And if I was to say to you that it's a very reasonable thing, people would throw up their hands and say, George, it's the opposite of being reasonable. It's just the opposite of being reasonable. It's completely and utterly impossible.

And our response to that should be this. It is not plausible to Canadians, but it's a very reasonable idea. Now, what do I mean by that?

[32 : 56] The reason it's not plausible to Canadians is because at the end of the day, most Canadians don't think that things like this, spiritual things or religious things, are actually real.

They're not actually real. They're not real like the way that it's real that there's kids making some noise in the background. It's not real like the fact that this water bottle is real. It's not real like the fact that we're in a building and we're in Ottawa.

It's just, it's something different. And that's why, you see, for most Canadians, they'd have no problem sitting through. You know, all in one day they could go to a native religious ceremony and do some type of religious ceremony that involves creation myths and all of that type of stuff and they could say afterwards, that was really wonderful, I had a wonderful time.

And then they could go to a Hindu ceremony and once again there could be maybe creation myths and all this other stuff and they could say at the end, that was really wonderful, I had a wonderful time. And then they could go to a Muslim ceremony and have a Muslim ceremony and then after it was all over they could say to the Monk, that was a very wonderful thing, I had a wonderful time. Well, the reason they can say all of these types of things is because at the end of the day they don't think any of that stuff is true. What the average Canadian thinks is something like this, you know, listen, life is really hard and whatever helps you get through a hard life and gives you some peace and helps you sleep at night, then good on you. As long as it doesn't hurt other people, good on you. And you know for some of you it's going to a native ceremony and going through these types of things. And you know, for some of you it's joining the running room and going for jogs with other people. And for others of you it's having a really good scotch at night with a nice cigar. And for others of you it's, I don't know, reading the Bible and going to a prayer group. And you know, as long, you know, whatever rocks your boat, whatever gives you peace, that's fine.

And so from that point of view to say that Jesus is the only way is just completely and utterly preposterous. It would be like me saying that French vanilla ice cream is the only ice cream that anybody's allowed to eat.

[34 : 57] That's completely and utterly that would be just, I mean people would think I was demented if I said that, right? You're only allowed to eat French vanilla ice cream. Because it's just ice cream, dude.

Like, right? And so that's why people look, when Christians make a claim that Jesus is the only way, what they're hearing is something like French vanilla is the only ice cream you should eat. Because they don't ultimately think that Christianity is talking about anything real.

Here's the reason why week in and week out, to differing degrees, I'm trying to communicate to you that the Christian claim is that there are real things. There are real things in the spiritual world. And that like these things really happened.

And Jesus really did die on a cross. He really did die. The tomb really was empty. He really did show up alive. There really is a God, and that God is the triune God described by Jesus and the Bible. And that when I pray, there really is a God who can hear my prayers. And there really are angels. And there really are certain things that are right and wrong. And that these things aren't just a matter of taste. And they're not a matter of giving me comfort. In fact, some of them make me profoundly uncomfortable because it means I have to disagree with my culture.

It means that if I went into a coffee shop, and it wouldn't matter which one it was, if everybody heard that I believe these things, they'd think it would be like I was demented. And so it doesn't even necessarily always give me peace in the short run, but they're true.

[36 : 31] It's real. We're talking about real things. And when you talk about real things, then it's reasonable when it comes to real things that sometimes there's only one way. You know, a very, very good example is if somebody came up and they'd found a cure for Alzheimer's. And they said, listen, we found there's a pill and there's an injection. And you take this DNA screening and it will show you whether you're prone to it. And if you go through this process, you won't get Alzheimer's. Or if you get the early stages of it, you take these pills. It'll stop the Alzheimer's from developing and it'll even go backwards and you regain your function. And if somebody said, and it's been proven, there's been, you know, the perfect evidential studies and it's, you know, been tested and we're 100% sure it's going to work and, you know, there's a small number of, you know, side effects from it, but it's going to work. And if somebody said, listen, I'm not going to take that, the guy who developed that voted for Trump.

You'd go, you're nuts. Or that guy that developed that voted for Trudeau. Or the person who did that didn't have any gays on his team. Or they were all gays. Like, no, it doesn't matter anything like that. Like, this is going to actually stop you from having Alzheimer's.

Like, you could go and take it and stop the Alzheimer's developing. Or, you know, cerebral, you know, any type of real disease. And you'd be nuts to say, well, because it's the only way I'm not going to take it. Well, that's ridiculous. You're going to say that there's this thing that stops you from Alzheimer's and unless there's 10 different pills, you're not going to have any pill until you have it.

But that's just ridiculous. Why? Because we're talking about something real. And that's what Christians are trying to communicate with this. If you could put up the third point. Sorry, I was just going to skip the second point because I missed something in my talk. It wasn't going to make any sense anymore. The third point.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to the triune God and this is perfectly reasonable. It's perfectly reasonable if there really are real things.

[38 : 31] If there really is a real God like who's in fact, actually the Christian doctrine is that God is more real than us because he's without beginning and end. He doesn't have an environment.

He's he's more real than us. And here's the other thing which makes this whole doctrine so beautiful which is why you should be enchanted with it because it's deeply coherent and beautiful.

If you could put up the final point, that would be very helpful because here's what the good news is. If you go back and you look at those verses 36 to 43 and you just check out, I'm just using these verses. The good news of the person and the finished work of Jesus is deeply coherent and beautiful.

Why is it beautiful? It's beautiful because the one who is Lord of all is the same one who will judge all is the same one who sees the desperate need of all is the same one who bore the curse of all and forgives all who trust into him.

There's a deep coherence to this. See, one of the reasons we have a meaning crisis in our culture is because when you find your when you your fundamental way of understanding the world is deeply incoherent, you whether you're conscious of it or not at an existential level, you're conscious that these things don't make any sense that you know, you can't sort of try to get some peace out of crystals and then like a Ouija board and then you take your science classes that say that those things don't even happen and then you have a different way of understanding morality and then you have a different way of trying to find meaning in your life and then a different way of understanding death and and origins and these things are all completely different all completely contradictory and completely and utterly incoherent and if any of them was made coherent it would become unbelievably ugly and frightening.

[40 : 20] But when you press into this profound message of the gospel, what you see is something which is deeply coherent and so that as it becomes more real to your heart you become more firmly established.

Life begins to have meaning. You have a way of understanding and navigating life that has meaning and it's so deeply beautiful. You don't have to worry that the one who saves you is not powerful enough to deal with other creation issues or with death or anything like that.

No, this message is Jesus is proclaimed as Lord of all. He's proclaimed as the one who will judge the living and the dead. He is judged as he is portrayed as the one who sees the desperate need of all and out of love he bears the curse of all and forgives all who trust into him.

There's this deep coherence and beauty of who Jesus is. And it's true. I've just been watching two things in closing.

I've been just watching something about the three great waves of persecution in the 200s done by different emperors that were empire-wide persecutions of Christians. And what I'm telling you is the historic understanding of the Christian faith.

[41 : 34] Why did literally tens of thousands of Christians die and they could have saved their life if they just sacrificed to an idol? It's because the idol is either a demon or not real.

And Jesus is real. And they would die for that. If you just stand as I bring this to a final close.

You know, a sermon like this, it'll make impact on you in terms of how we shall then live. But what my hope and prayer is, is this story becomes more real to you and as the gospel becomes more real to you, you understand why it's so important to give and to pray for missionaries.

You understand why it's so important that even if we can't reach into different people groups in the city, maybe we have no way of trying to figure out how we could share the gospel with people who vote for Trudeau or trans activists or, you know, Jordan Peterson conservatives or whatever the group is, that we should be praying into that.

And we should be praying into how we cannot wait for them to come to us, but how we can actually go to where they're comfortable in such a way that at some point in time we can bear witness to Jesus to them.

[42 : 51] Like that's the loving heart of Christ for us. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we thank you for this story. We thank you, Father, that even as Peter was proclaiming these deep truths, that as he was proclaiming them, people came to believe in Jesus and the Holy Spirit fell on them and they were baptized and you launched this whole new movement into that world beyond Judaism, which in those days was called the pagan world.

And Father, we thank you for this powerful story. We thank and praise you that you seek, you came to seek and save the lost and no division will stop you from finding people in every people group whom you have called to be your children by adoption and grace.

We marvel, Father, that you have chosen us and worthy as we are. Father, we ask that this truth would not make us feel proud, but humble us, that you would do everything that needed to be done, that we might be made right with you.

And we ask, Father, that you would give us a heart of love for those who are on other sides of divides in our world, that we would pray for them, Father, that you would give us a heart to pray that they, like us, will have a faith, a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we ask all these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Amen.

[44 : 41] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.