

Heaven, Demons & Jesus

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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.

Father, sometimes, Father, we have to be sort of un-Canadian as we read your Word. Father, we don't like being un-Canadian, but we confess before you that unless we sort of are un-Canadian, we can't sometimes really hear what your Word is saying to us. And we thank you, Father, that your Word reveals us as we really are in the real world, as it reveals your Son, the real Savior, who has come to die for the real us, each of us. So we ask, Father, that the Holy Spirit would come into our hearts gently but deeply so that your Word might come gently but deeply into our hearts and that you might speak and rule in the very center of who we are. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior.

Amen. Please be seated. So if, I think this is going to have a sermon title and you will see if you go online later on. I think the title is going to be Heaven, Demons, and Jesus. Heaven, Demons, and Jesus. It's one story and two parts.

And as I begin this sermon, I'm going to, you might have picked up something in the prayer, those of you who were, you know, listening to the words rather than just praying your own prayers, which is perfectly good. I'm about to do something which is very un-Canadian and most Canadians would say is rude.

[2 : 4 6] And so I guess I'm just going to ask that you give me a little bit of grace. And for those of you watching online, that within the next minute or two, you don't turn it off in anger. And those of you who are here who are maybe offended by what I'm about to say, that you don't just tune me out, but just give me some grace.

And the reason I'm going to do something which is a little bit un-Canadian, which is, and sort of generally Canadians would view, is just sort of not right, a bit rude, is because the problem that we have when we come to the Bible is that we basically think that our own views are better. And it's not necessarily, I mean, sometimes it's because we've thought very deeply about it, but in many cases, it's just, these are my views and my views are better. This is my truth and my truth is better. I mean, your truth is fine, but frankly, I like my truth better. And that sort of can end up being a bit of a barrier for us to actually hear what the Bible has to say. But the other thing about it is, as we all know, one of the ways to insult a Canadian is to say that they're thoughtless.

Like, if you say to anybody, you're thoughtless, you never think, you just follow the crowd, like they'll be offended. It doesn't matter if that's actually what they're like, or if that's how you are, but we'll be offended. So just in giving me some grace, let's just walk towards something which we Canadians generally say to each other all the time at funerals. And when we've met somebody who's just lost a loved one, they've lost their husband or their wife, one of their children or their best friends, what is it that they say? They've gone to a better place.

They've gone to a better place. If your loved one, maybe they've had a sister or a very good friend who's died before them, we'll say they've gone to a better place, and now they're with Sue.

That's who they are. And then we might add that they're looking down on us or that they're with us or some type of thing like that. But that's a very, very common thing. You know, Bob has died. He's gone to a better place, and now he's with Sue.

[4 : 59] And now he's also with Fred and a couple of other of his buddies. And then we might make a joke, you know, they're up there having a beer or a good laugh or whatever, but they've gone to a better place, and then they're usually with some loved one.

Now, it's rude for Canadians to question this, and that's what I'm going to do. So first of all, so Bob dies, and he goes to a better place, and he goes to be with Sue and Fred and some of his drinking buddies.

We also know that Bob had two ex-wives, and they've both died. Are his ex-wives with him? His ex-wives despised him, and he hated them.

So is Bob with his ex-wives and with Sue? And would Bob think it was a better place to be stuck forever with his two ex-wives and Sue? And what about the fact that Bob was really mean to his youngest sister, like really, really mean, which you don't bring up at the funeral, but his younger sister's also died, so is he with the younger sister?

And would that be a better place for any of them? Would the younger sister say, oh, goody, here comes Bob. I get to spend eternity with Bob in a better place. So if they're not in a better place, like if that younger sister and the two ex-wives aren't in a better place, where are you saying that they are?

[6 : 45] See why this is a very rude thing to say to Canadians. Where are those other people? Where did the two ex-wives go? Like, are they in hell? Well, now here some wags might be tempted to say yes, but that would be very un-Canadian as well.

Are they just in non-existence? You see, here's the problem. Our conception, this is a separate thing from just how it is that we think that, given that, you know, evolution is, naturalistic evolution is true and all of that type of stuff, that there could be some type of a spiritual place that, like, apart from all of that, here's the thing.

Your better place is made up of people you like and approve of. The better place is made up of people that you like and approve of.

To which I have to say, who made you the center of the universe and the determiner of who goes to heaven and hell? Who made you the center of the universe and the determiner of who goes to heaven and hell?

Who made you the center of the universe? In fact, doesn't that sound narcissistic and arrogant? Now, I've really offended you, some of you, because, of course, none of you intend this.

[8 : 12] Like, none of you intend this. You see, in fact, and here, by the way, I'm not pointing a finger. I love the analogy that when you point a finger at somebody, there's three fingers pointing back at you.

And, you see, what the thing reveals is a little bit of just about the way we naturally think. And part of the thing it reveals is that we just naturally think in self-centered terms.

It's just natural to us. It's so natural to us that we're not often even aware of the fact that... But, really, like, every person at the funeral has just said, I am the center of the universe.

I get to determine who goes to heaven and hell and non-existence. That's what they've just said. But we don't... No, no, no, no, no, no, no. I don't mean that. But then, well, there's nothing that we mean. That's the problem. So, I say that because, you see, if we look at the text, which we're going to start reading in about a minute, if you read the text thinking, well, that's all very interesting, that's all very, you know, religious, but I prefer my way, I just wanted to say there's a problem with your way.

And I want to suggest that actually, if you start to realize that there's a problem with your way and you actually start to hear the Bible, you realize that the Bible solves the deep longings of your heart.

[9 : 31] You see, here's the thing. The good thing about that statement, they've gone to a better place, the good thing about that is despite all philosophy and all science, despite all of the bright people who are in the elites of Canada, you refuse to believe that death is the final thing about a human being.

You refuse to accept it, that death wins. That's the good that you're saying. And the Bible is good news to that good longing and that good insight that you have.

It's very interesting, but you see, you don't get it until you, you see, I only said this because the Bible's going to talk about it. It's very funny. I was just, I was telling somebody, I think last Sunday, I just finished, I don't read that many Stephen King novels, but I read a Stephen King novel just recently, and you know, he's such a weird, like an odd guy, but in the course of the book, like the hero of the book, says this, the Bible is relentless in puncturing our self-deceptions.

Doesn't that sound like something that G.K. Chesterton or C.S. Lewis would say? That's Stephen King. I don't know where it comes from. The Bible is relentless in puncturing our self-deception.

So let's look at what the Bible actually says. So it begins like this. If you have your Bibles, turn in them to Mark 9, verse 2. We're beginning the second half of the Gospel of Mark.

[11 : 08] What's just happened before this has been that Jesus is revealed for the first time that he's going to be going to Jerusalem. He's going to die. He's going to be captured by the authorities.

He's going to be put to death on a cross, and he's going to rise from the dead. He's revealed it for the first time. And the disciples, especially Peter, Peter says, no way, Jose, that's not going to happen to you.

And Jesus rebukes Peter and says, you're thinking like the devil. You're not thinking the way you should. And then Jesus says, listen, anybody who wants to follow me has to pick up their cross and follow me.

And that's sort of where we go. And now it's six days after that. This is how the text goes. In this ancient biography of Jesus, it goes like this, verse 2 of chapter 9, and after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves, and he was transfigured before them.

And I'll explain what that means in a moment. And his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one, and actually the word one there in the original language is a technical word for an expert launderer.

[12 : 17] So it's saying that, and they don't translate it that way, but that's actually a technical word, not one, but expert launderer, that no expert launderer on earth could bleach them.

Verse 4, and there appeared to them, that is Peter, James, John, and Jesus, and there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. For Peter did not know what to say, for he and the other two were terrified.

And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, this is my beloved son, listen to him. And suddenly looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them, but Jesus only.

So what's happening here a little bit? Those of you who come to the church a few times, you know that I'm always plumbing the depths of the great tradition of history, of the philosophers and literature of the past.

[13 : 26] And so, you know, out of my deep delving into that great history, the best way to understand the transfiguration is if you've watched Chris Pratt's movie, The Tomorrow War, which of course is part of that great, that was a joke, it really went over flat.

If you've watched the movie, The Tomorrow War, this isn't a spoiler because it happens about six minutes into the movie, what happens, and it's just the most recent movie of things like this that happened all the time, people are watching the final of the World Cup in soccer.

And right towards the end of the game, all of a sudden, there's all these flashing lights and all of this other type of stuff. And then out of the flashing lights come this group of people and they announce that they've come, I think it's from 37 years in the future.

And they've come from 37 years in the future into the past and then that's what gets the rest of the movie. Basically, they're trying to, all the people in the future are dying against aliens and they want to get new people from the past to fight the aliens and that's the rest of the movie.

But the point is that that gives you a bit of an insight about what's happening here. It's as if the Christians believe that there will come a day when Jesus will return.

[14 : 36] And when Jesus returns, he will come with angels and archangels. He will come with the company of heaven. And this created order will come to an end, but we will see Jesus return with the saints so to speak.

And what we see is that which is in the future and we don't know if that's 10 minutes from now or a thousand years from now. But that future event for a moment, we see it come into the past and we see Jesus now with Moses and with Elijah.

So that's sort of what's happening to it. The other thing is what happens to Jesus is what you really are seeing is that, and the words in the original language are passive.

So it's not that Jesus like flicks a switch and does something, but God does something. And actually, there's a bit of an issue. Nobody knows why Moses and Elijah were chosen.

The text doesn't give an answer to that. One group of scholars and thinkers wonder if the reason it was Moses and Elijah was that they are the only two people in the Old Testament, what our Jewish friends call the Tanakh, who actually see the back of God at this opportunity where for a moment, Peter and James and John, it's as if there's a pinprick.

[15 : 57] God makes a pinprick in the veil that hides the true glory of God, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ from human eyes.

and for one brief moment, God makes a bit of a pinprick, just the tiniest pinprick. And even with that tiniest pinprick, you see the glory of Jesus.

You see the glory of Jesus. You see, Christians believe that God, the Son of God, without stopping being God, sets aside his glory and his prerogatives and his majesty and his splendor, sets all of those things aside, but remaining fully God, but setting those things aside, takes into himself our human nature and walks amongst us.

And he becomes both fully God and fully human, but he's one person. And for this brief moment, God takes away that, in a sense, that setting aside, and Peter and James and John get to see that Jesus is glorified, he's transfigured.

And what happens is that not only is that Jesus glorified and transfigured, but it even changes the clothing that he's wearing so that they, that that is glorified.

[17 : 18] And the other thing it sees here, and this is really important, you see, Peter and James and John, they have been trained their entire life to understand that there's only one God.

But when Peter sees Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, and Moses and Elijah are also glorious, and they're so glorious that for a moment Peter forgets that he's a monotheist and wants to build three tents because it looks as if there's three gods who are there.

Now, this is very, very, very, very significant to us in several ways. You see, the work, what God intends for his children when they come to faith in Christ is not that you will vanish into the ocean of God, and it's not that you will just become something spiritual and ethereal and a better place, losing your body, but that you will be you in all of who you are, and you will be completely, massively, glorified, so glorified that if some of us were to see you in the new heaven and the new earth, we would think you were a God and feel compelled to worship you.

This is the destiny that God has for his children. Now, if you understand that that's the destiny that God has for his children, you realize that that means if I have to get from me to what this is going to be in the future, well, no amount of prayer is going to do that.

No amount of giving my money to charity, my generosity, the church, is going to do that. No amount of exercise. no amount of reading John Maxwell books on leadership and attitude management.

[19 : 49] Like, nothing that I can do will accomplish that. And how do I know that empirically? Well, because when I die, I die, I lose it all. Unless God does something, I can never get from here to here.

only God can do something to get me, this me, to here. You and I are completely and utterly helpless unless God does it.

And actually, you see here as well something else which is really important, that if the me who's here still has the evil that is within me, my narcissism, my self-centeredness, my besetting sins, if that ends up having the glory of this, then this is not something that you would feel like worshipping, but that you would flee from.

I would be a great evil. And unless God, in getting me from here to here, also deals with those parts of me that are far from God and narcissistic, I cannot get there.

One other thing which is very important about this story, I mean, there's more than one, but just for now. One of the things, the only reason we read this ancient biography of Jesus based on either direct eyewitness testimony or other eyewitness testimony, and this ancient biography was written when there were literally hundreds and thousands of people who were eyewitnesses.

[21 : 44] So when we're reading this, I mean, it looks all fancy now, but if you go to some museums, you'll see scrolls and papyrus, and you'll realize that's exactly what this was originally, that this fellow by the name of Mark wrote this ancient eyewitness biography, and it's been recorded.

And the only reason we know this and read this is ultimately because Jesus actually did die as he predicted, and he actually did rise from the dead. And if that hadn't happened, then we wouldn't read about this and know about it because this would just be all make-believe language.

The language in the original Greek is the language of the newspaper, of just recounting facts. It's not the language of mythology or story or parable, but the language of the same language which is being used to talk about the death of the queen and her funeral and all of that type of stuff.

It's the same type of fact language which is being used. And so one of the things that the disciples had up until now, they had a problem. If Jesus, they saw Jesus stop storms.

They saw Jesus raise, they've seen Jesus heal the sick. They've seen Jesus walk on water. And so the question they would have had is how on earth could somebody who could do that actually die on a cross?

[22 : 58] Like, a week or two ago, I don't know if it happened downtown, but where I was, there was a storm and there were hail pellets this big. And it was so, the hail came down so hard that you couldn't actually see, like I couldn't see the car just like 40, 50 feet away.

I could hardly see it. That's how heavy the hail was coming down in waves. And Jesus could just stop that. He stopped the storm. He just stops it.

So you could see and understand, people would say, Jesus, Peter would say, Jesus, how on earth could you possibly die when you can do things like that? Like that, it just, no way, it's not going to happen. It's impossible.

And now they have another reason to think that Jesus isn't going to die because they've seen Jesus in his glory. And here's the thing, and our Muslim friends perfectly articulate this, and what they articulate is the natural human understanding of how the universe works.

And in the universe, the way the universe works is the glorious, the godlike, does not die for schmucks. That makes no sense.

[24 : 09] It goes against reason. It goes against the natural habits of our imagination. It goes against our daydreaming. It goes against all of that type of stuff, that some being of great power or glory would die for schmucks, that would die for the unworthy.

It just is not the way the world works. And so Peter and James and John, they've seen Jesus, and now there's going to be another reason why they believe that Jesus can't possibly die on a cross, because it just goes against the way, you know, our Muslim friends will say for us, it is inconceivable that Allah would die for you folks and me.

It is just inconceivable, it is unimaginable, it is not the way the universe works. Therefore, your religion is wrong and incorrect, and you must come to the true teaching of Muhammad about Allah.

But here we see something radically different that goes against natural imagination.

Now I have, so what we're going to see here is the story continues in two different parts. And just as an aside, one of the things which is so important, you know, one of the things which is so beautiful about the Bible is it both gives you stories and it gives you ideas.

[25 : 32] It gives you things which are a bit abstract, but they help each other. The stories form us in a deep, unconscious way that abstract ideas make sense.

And that's what we're going to see right here. If you read Philippians chapter 2 verses 5 and 11, 5 to 11, it talks about God's inside his glory and coming down and all. It's all abstract, but we see that actually enacted right here in the story.

Look what happens beginning at verse 9. They come down the mountain. Verse 9, And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus charged them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

This is another prediction of his death and his rising from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean. And they asked him, Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?

And Jesus said to them, Elijah does come first to restore all things. But then he says, Here's a question. How is it written that the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

[26 : 39] But I tell you that Elijah has come and they did to him whatever they pleased as it is written of him. And there's three different ancient biographies. There's four ancient biographies of Jesus and three of them tell this story.

And I think two of the other ones mention that Jesus is referring to John the Baptist. But here's the thing. What Jesus is wanting to say to the disciples is when you read what our Jewish friends call the Tanakh and what we now called the Old Testament and they would have just known as the Bible.

You have to understand that you're reading it within the lens of natural human imagination and reason. But if you actually go back and read the Tanakh, you will see that it's telling you of a very, very, very different God, the true God that actually exists.

the God who didn't create human beings as slaves or food or didn't create human beings for his ego or for his lack, didn't create human beings as some type of divine tragedy whereby somehow or another beings got created when God didn't intend it, but that God created human beings to be his friends, to be his children, and that human beings turned from God and brought evil and death into the world and that even when human beings had turned from God and bringing evil and death into the world, that God made the promise that he would rescue them and do for them what they could not do for themselves and that you would in fact see at the very heart of reality that God will die to make his children right with him because they cannot make themselves right with him by themselves.

And this gets enacted very powerfully. If you go back earlier in Mark, Jesus is introduced as Emmanuel, God with us. And here we see breaking down the natural habit of how our minds work, we see that Jesus revealed in his majesty coming down the mountain and he comes down the mountain to be amongst us.

[28 : 52] He comes into an argument, he comes into religion, he comes into human powerlessness, he comes to the demonic, he comes to sickness, he comes to chaos, he comes amongst us.

Look what happens, verse 14. And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them and the scribes, those are sort of like experts, they'd be like in Canadian terms, they'd be a combination of professors professors at elite universities and public intellectuals sort of at the same time.

And as well as that, they would be sort of viewed as an expert on spirituality. So if you could sort of view Oprah, a public intellectual, and a U of T or U of O or Carleton prof or Université de Montréal prof, that's sort of what a scribe is, all rolled up into one.

So they, verse 14 again, and when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them and scribes arguing with them and immediately all the crowd, so that's Oprah's arguing with them, Jordan Peterson's, you know, Oprah and Jordan Peterson in the same sentence doesn't make any sense, but Oprah's arguing, Jordan Peterson's arguing and your favorite, you know, the most elite professor at your university is arguing with them and immediately, verse 15, all the crowd, when they saw Jesus, were greatly amazed and ran up and greeted him and Jesus asked them, what are you arguing about with my disciples?

And 17, someone from the crowd said, teacher, I brought my son to you for he has a spirit that makes him mute and whenever the spirit seizes my son, it throws my son down and my son foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid, so I asked your disciples to cast out the demon and they were not able.

[30 : 42] And verse 19, and Jesus answered them, O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me. And they brought the boy to Jesus and when the spirit, the evil spirit, saw Jesus, immediately it convulsed the boy and the boy fell on the ground and rolled about foaming at the mouth.

And Jesus asked his father, how long has this been happening to him? And Jesus said, from childhood and it has often cast him into fire and into water to destroy him.

But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us. Just sort of pause there for a second. It's very significant that we read this story on the day of the baptism of that young baby who's temporarily quiet.

There's this really old Christian writer who said, if the devil takes an interest in your children when they're very young, you should teach them when they're very young. Isn't that just brilliant?

If the devil seeks out children when they're very young, then you, if you're a Christian parent, should be instructing your child at a very young age. That's why ministries like our Sunday school is really important.

[31 : 57] Like if you're doing, if you volunteer and become part of the Sunday school roster or help with nursery, you're doing something really precious to help form disciples of Jesus.

But let's get back to the story. So he says, so the dad says, verse 22, if you have compassion on us and help us. And Jesus, verse 23, said to him, if you can, all things are possible for one who believes.

And here it means believes in him, in Jesus, not just have some, like, belief emotion, but believes in Jesus. And then the dad is so brilliant. Look at what he says.

The dad is so brilliant in verse 24. Immediately, when Jesus says, you know, if you believe in me, you can do anything. And verse 24, immediately the father of the child cried out and said, I believe, help my unbelief.

that, friends, that, friends, if you pray that prayer, you're praying something the Bible said you can pray. Like, if you're struggling with unbelief, and maybe you don't even want to share it with people, like, some of you who've heard many of my sermons, I've shared with you the different times when I've almost walked away from the Christian faith, sort of in the first decade or so of my Christian faith.

[33 : 18] And, but here, Jesus gives us permission to pray, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. And here's another takeaway which is really important.

Often we Christians say that what marks you, a Christian, is their peace in Christ. And that's true. But it's not all of the story. The other part of the story is that what marks a Christian is their inner spiritual warfare.

what marks a Christian is not just their inner peace in Christ, but their inner spiritual warfare as they struggle with those ways whereby, you know, there's an old hymn that goes in the, the things of earth will grow strangely dim.

And that's true. But in many ways, the problem for us as Christians is that the things of Christ grow strangely dim. We have a moment of conviction in the church or listening to music or something like that and then we go away and there's cars and there's buses and we're hungry and we have bills to pay and we're worried about the Queen and King Charles and we're worried about Pierre Polivare or whatever it is that we're worried about and the things of Christ grow strangely dim.

And what marks a Christian is not just their inner peace but their inner spiritual warfare that we believe while dealing with those things which encourage unbelief.

[34 : 49] And when verse 25, and when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit saying to it, you mute and deaf spirit, I command you come out of him and never enter him again.

And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out and the boy was like a corpse so that most of them said he is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up and he arose.

And when he had entered the house, that is Jesus, when Jesus had entered the house, the disciples asked him privately, why could we not cast it out? And Jesus said to them, this kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.

It's the first place in Merck's Gospel where Jesus tells us to pray. Now here's the thing, just wrapping it up. You see here perfectly, Peter wants to stay in the mountain and worship.

Jesus goes right down to where the argument is, the demon is, the demons are, where the religious experts are, where sickness is, and he comes amongst us.

[35 : 56] And he comes amongst us to heal. You know, there's a very, very brief type of picture here of what the whole cross is about and the Christian life is about.

And what our human destiny is. You see, we all need, at different times in our life, healing.

And it's beyond the scope of my time of this sermon. But I think the Bible teaches that there really are demons and that they can affect human beings and they do affect human beings.

They can oppress us and we need deliverance. just so you know, one of the things I do while I'm singing over there is I take a pause from singing and every Sunday I ask the Lord to cast all demons far from us.

That's what I do. I believe it. I believe that's what the Bible teaches. I'm not embarrassed by it. It's what the Bible teaches. And Jesus comes to defeat the devil, to defeat death, to defeat sin.

[37 : 00] He comes to bring the true and greater healing of our bodies, which will only happen when we see him in the new heaven and the new earth and that we are like him. And if our bodies, and if who we are, all we are, not just the spiritual or emotional part that will go up into some better place, but if all of who we are matters to God and our destiny is to have all of who we are redeemed, that means that the evil within us, not necessarily that there's demons within us, but that there is evil within us, that that has been atoned for by Jesus' death upon the cross, that it is removed, that we receive new life, and the direction, the destiny for human beings is a new resurrected body of glory in a new heaven and a new earth, and rather than that leading us to think that if that's the case, the things of earth should grow strangely dim, the fact of the matter is is that Jesus said as you're gripped by the gospel, you walk to the mess, and you pray deliverance, and you pray for healing, and you start hospitals, and you start schools, and you get clean water, and you start businesses that can employ people, and you dream up songs and dances to make life worth living, because that's all in the direction of where Christ is going when he dies on the cross and rises from the dead, and invites you to be his child by adoption and grace when you put your faith and trust in him, and as the gospel grips you, as Christ grips you, that's where you walk to, and for those of you, those of us who struggle with feeling like we're in the right, the real body, if they're struggling with feeling like we're in the right body,

Christ will make you at home with your body. That's the direction of which he will move, because you're going to have a redeemed body for all eternity, and that is a good thing.

That is the deep longing. Woody Allen famously said, when I die, I don't want to live in somebody's memory. I want to live in my apartment, because we don't want to live without a body, and only the Christian gospel describes how that might happen, and gives substance and depth to the longings of our heart.

Please stand. Bow our heads in prayer. Father, if there are any of us here who, some of us, maybe we've, we wouldn't say that we've ever been a Christian.

Father, if we ask that your Holy Spirit would speak and move in them, and I ask, now this isn't a prayer, but I'm speaking, Father, to those people, if you feel that pressure to turn to Christ, I just ask that you just stop listening to my prayer, and you just turn to Christ, and open the door, and let Christ come into your heart to be your Savior and Lord.

[40 : 17] And if you're here, and maybe you don't know where you are with Christ, but you know you've been away from Him for a long time, this is your opportunity to know once again that you are His, and live like that, because He pardons your offenses and gives you new life.

But for all of us, we pray, Father, thank you so much that Jesus is the Savior of the world. Thank you so much that He came to defeat the devil and all hellish and fell powers and principalities in this world, that He came to defeat death and sin, which is the result, the cause of death, that He has accomplished that in His life and death and resurrection.

And we ask, Lord, that you make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, longing for that day when He will return. And while we long for His return, Lord, that you might equip us and strengthen us to walk towards those dark places and those empty places and those broken and despairing places of the world, to be used by you to bring light and life and love and joy and wholeness and healing, all bearing witness to Jesus, the one who brings us the true and greater joy and true and greater healing.

So we ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would do that work in through us to your great glory, not to ours. And we ask this in the name of Jesus and all God's people said, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.