

"Today I Choose Jesus"

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[0:00] Father in heaven, we're all trying to make sense of everything going on in our city. And we need you.

God, we're not going to look to ourselves to figure this out. We're not going to lean on our own understanding. But we are going to acknowledge you in all of our ways that you will make straight our paths.

And Lord Jesus, our risen shepherd, lead us on. Father, would you now pour out your spirit upon us in order to spotlight Jesus to rally this church around our risen head in that we would be a body in motion moving forward together.

Father, we believe that you have raised us up for such a time as this. Not to shrink back, but to press in for the glory of Jesus among all the peoples living in the city of Kenosha.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh upon us. Melt us, mold us, fill us, use us.

[1:25] And it's in the name of Jesus we all pray. Amen. Amen. In order for us to move forward together as a church, today we must choose Jesus.

Today I choose Jesus, and today you must choose Jesus so that we move forward in the midst of crisis for the glory of his name.

I think it's safe to say that the last five and a half months has literally been one crisis after another. We've been living in an unrelenting, accumulating crises.

And many of us are just weary, tired, confused, overwhelmed. It started in March with COVID-19, and at the end of March, George Floyd died under the knee of a white police officer.

And then all throughout the last several months, there has been this saber-rattling of politics from the left and from the right, sending out messages.

[2:38] It can be very confusing, disheartening. Divisive. In August, many of us who are sending children to the Kenosha Unified School District schools, we watched the board flip-flop on some important decisions.

It just added to the confusion and accumulation of crises. And of course, all of that has been overshadowed by what happened a week ago today.

Many of you have seen the video. A black man, Jacob Blake, being shot in the back seven times by a white Kenosha police officer. The investigation's underway.

There's information coming out. We want as much information to come out. We're praying for that. But it was like the lighting of a match in a cinder block, cinder box.

Because over the last week, we've witnessed peaceful protests. We've witnessed violent riots.

[3:47] We've witnessed businesses boarding up their windows all throughout downtown, all throughout uptown, all throughout 75th Street, and reaching out onto Green Bay Road and beyond.

There's been this giant boarding up of protection. Yesterday on my way in, I counted this, I would drive in at 7 a.m. every morning over the last four or five days to see where our building was, if it was.

And Friday on my way in, I counted at least 11 businesses that had been gutted by fire, burned to the ground. We've seen riots.

We've heard rumors of riots. There's been the loss of life. There's been the loss of livelihoods. But there's been the loss of personal property. I don't know about you, but Jenny and I, every night, we'd turn on Facebook and watch CJTV to see what was going to happen next.

The national media descended on our hometown and we watched Kenosha burn. Unrelenting.

[5:09] This past Tuesday, I backed my pickup truck to a back door of the church, and this is when the curfew was still at 8 p.m. It was at 7.53

p.m.

I was loading into the back of my pickup truck electronics, computers, other valuable items, important documents. I was putting in the back of the truck and I was watching and sensing tension rising on Sheridan and 60th.

And as I was closing the back gate of my truck, this thought came into my mind, is this going to be the last time I see our building intact? Will I come back tomorrow morning and just see a smoldering pile of rubble?

And then this thought came into my mind. It's all in the Lord's hands. Today I choose Jesus and so must you. In order for us to move forward as a church in these trying times, we must choose Jesus. And the question I want to ask and answer for you this morning is why? Why must we trust Jesus to move forward?

[6:31] And there are two reasons why. First is his person and the second is his work. His person and his work.

And my, what I believe, spirit-led goal this morning is to bathe your minds with the glory of Jesus. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will spotlight, he will glorify me, spotlight Jesus in our hearts this morning.

and you will find fresh strength to move forward in our circumstances. May God do a work to help you choose Jesus with me today in order to move forward.

So in that in mind, I'm going to pray for us and would you pray? Would you ask God to light up Jesus in your heart?

Let's pray together. Father, would you shine the spotlight, Holy Spirit enlivened spotlight of your word on Jesus now and give us strength.

[7:46] Amen. For us to move forward, we need to choose Jesus and the first reason why is his person. Now, a while ago, I was sent a sermon by an old black preacher and he pointed his listeners to Jesus all throughout the scriptures.

It was a beautiful sermon. It was a compelling sermon and taking my cue from him, I'm going to remind you of the glory of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament and in the New and the way to take this in is to receive it.

In the Old Testament, Genesis chapter 1, in the beginning, God created and John 1, Colossians 1, Hebrews 1, the creator is none other than Jesus who created all things which he means he created all of us.

Do you remember that wonderful children's song? Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world, red and yellow, black and white, they, his image bearers, are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children and the big children of the world. Jesus is the creator of Genesis 1 and then in Deuteronomy in the giving of the law what we recall is that when Jesus came he was the new and greater Moses.

[9:20] He not only fulfilled the law in perfect obedience in the way he lived his life, he explained the fulfillment of the law in his great kingdom manifesto the Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5, 6 and 7.

And Joshua, it is Jesus the second person of the Trinity in a pre-incarnate appearance in which he shows himself to Joshua and says Joshua, take off your sandals you are standing on holy ground. and then he leads God's people into the promised land. Our Lord Jesus is leading us to the heavenly promised land.

He is with us and he is holy. Judges. Do you remember the last verse of Judges? In those days there was no king in Israel.

Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. We are surrounded by people who are doing what's right in their own eyes. Trying to make sense of everything in their own way.

[10:31] But we have a king who is on his throne explaining to us, directing us, King Jesus into him. We choose today to bow our knee and say lead on King Jesus.

1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, books recounting the repeated limitations and failures of the kings of Israel and Judah.

In 2 Samuel 7 there is this prophecy saying that there will be a son of David who will always never vacate the throne of David. And who is that?

David's greater son, Jesus. Of the increase of his government there will be no end. Esther, our God, the Lord Jesus has raised up his church for such a time as this to bear witness to the power and glory of God to a people who are hopeless and broken, confused.

The Psalms, the Lord Jesus is our ever-present help in time of trouble. Psalm 16, 8, because the Lord Jesus is at our right hand, we will not be shaken.

[11:53] Proverbs, it is our reverence for Jesus as our creator, ruler, savior, and judge that governs all of our lives and we craft a life of wisdom.

Even now, in the midst of trying circumstances, in Isaiah, Jesus is God with us, Emmanuel. Jesus is the light shining in the darkness.

Jesus is the righteous branch. Jesus is the suffering servant upon God poured out his chastisement to bring us peace and remember, it is our God, Jesus, that gives strength to the weary and causes us to mount up with wings like eagles to run and not grow weary.

Lamentations, in the midst of smoldering rubble, we call this to mind that the Lord, Jesus, is our portion. Therefore, we will hope in him.

Daniel, it's Jesus who's the fourth person in the midst of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. He is with his people in the fires of affliction and he is with us in the midst of this affliction leading us on.

[13:16] Jonah, this disgruntled prophet, proclaimed repentance to Nineveh and they repented. We proclaim Jesus and people will repent.

We read throughout the minor prophets of the fierce and terrible day of the Lord that is coming and it's Jesus who will come and make all things right. He will vindicate his name and his people.

Of course, there's Habakkuk, though the fig tree may not blossom nor fruit be on the vines. We will rejoice in the Lord. We will take joy in the God of our salvation for the Lord is our strength because we are united to Jesus the vine.

We will be strong in him, not with our own strength, with his strength. Today, I choose Jesus because of what the Old Testament points to in Jesus.

and then there's the New Testament. Matthew, he's the king that has come and established his saving reign on earth through his blood and he calls all his citizens through the Sermon on the Mount, his kingdom manifesto, he calls them to live out, love your neighbor and love your God.

[14:51] Remember Mark 4 on a boat in the Sea of Galilee? It's crazy. Everybody's afraid. Jesus is asleep. His disciples wake him up.

He stands up and says, Peace. And the sea is calmed and his disciples say, Who then is this that even the wind and sea obey him? He is our God.

He brings calm to chaos. On the road to Emmaus, the risen Jesus says to two of his disciples, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explains to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

It's all about Jesus. In John, Jesus says, I'm the bread of life. I'm the light of the world. I am the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd.

I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the true vine. And then in John 8, 58, it's the wonder I am before Abraham was I am.

[15:59] Because our Jesus is the I am, we choose him today. In order for us to move forward as a church, we choose Jesus. In the book of Acts, it's the resurrection Jesus who brings the church into existence and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, empowers his church, sends them out to the nations, and the gospel spreads, and the church grows, and the church suffers, and the church says, we count it worthy to suffer for Jesus.

Romans, we're not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ because it's God's power to save all who believe red, yellow, black, and white. They are precious image bearers in his sight.

1 and 2 Corinthians, the cross of Christ is foolishness to some and is an offense to others, but those who are being saved, it is the power of God. Brothers and sisters, could it be that right now in the city of Kenosha, there are people, whether they realize it or not, that they will be saved upon hearing the gospel.

In the book of Philippians, chapter 2, we read about Jesus who humbled himself and became nothing. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a scandalous cross, and then listen to this.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[17:52] That's why we choose Jesus today. And that's why Paul said, for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. Colossians, Jesus is the Lord of creation, he's Lord of the church, and he says, Paul says, him we proclaim.

He's the Lord of the church, he's the Lord of the church, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom for we may present, that we may present everyone, red, yellow, black, and white, mature in Christ.

And then Paul says, for this I toil, struggling with all his Holy Spirit energy that he so powerfully works in me. The book of Philemon.

It shows us that the gospel puts everyone on the same level as sinners needing salvation in Christ alone.

Jesus is the great equalizer of all people, of his people. There's no partiality in the family of God. Hebrews points us to Jesus.

[18:54] Set your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and is now seated at the right hand of God. James 2, 1.

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus, the Lord of glory. He's the Lord of glory.

Then let me just skip ahead to the book of Revelation. In Revelation 5, we read about myriads, myriads, thousands upon thousands of angels surrounding Jesus.

And what it's describing is what's happening right now. Thousands upon thousands of angels falling down before him and worshipping.

And what are they saying? What are they singing? Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

[20:02] And then it says, to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever. Today, I choose Jesus because of his person, who he is, shown in the Old Testament, shown in the New Testament.

And that's why, brothers and sisters, we must choose him today. He's our glorious one. He's our great head. But I also choose Jesus today because of what he's done, what he is doing and what he will do, his work.

Today, I choose Jesus because he died on a cross for me. And if you're a follower of Jesus, he died on a cross for you. We are not our own.

We were bought at a price. So now, we choose to glorify God with our bodies and with our lives, with all that we are. In light of what he has done for us on the cross, we live for him.

He's our king. And if you're not a follower of Jesus, you must decide. Choose this day who you will follow, who you will live for.

[21:32] You will either choose to live for yourself and suffer the eternal punishment of a just God, or you choose to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus.

And you're not going to find burden. You're going to find life, abundant life, and life forever with God in glory.

That's whom we proclaim. So today, I choose, and I invite you to choose Jesus, not only just who he is, but in what he's done on the cross for us.

And then, there's what he's doing right now. He's actively at work. We read in Matthew 16, 18, that Jesus is presently building his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

The church is not a building, but a people. Our building can be smashed to rubble, but we, as the people of Christ the King Church, will continue on.

[22:40] And our Lord Jesus is presently adding people from every tribe, tongue, and nation to his church through the blood he spilled on the cross.

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world, red and yellow, black and white. He is bringing them together to form a multicultural, multi-ethnic movement of men and women who've been bought by his blood and choose to follow him.

brothers and sisters, Jesus is building his church today in the city of Kenosha. He's at work.

He's not done. He hasn't scurried off. He's using this for his good, his glory, adding people.

I'm hearing reports more and more of people coming to repentance and believing in Jesus. He's building his church and I don't know about you but I want to be about what he's doing.

[23:47] Today I choose Jesus and so must you. That's how we move forward. But there's something else he's doing too that I hope will bring encouragement to you.

We read in Romans chapter 8 and Hebrews chapter 7 and even in 1 John 2 that right now at the right hand of God the Father Jesus is presently interceding for his people.

And what that intercession accomplishes is this. Our salvation will be accomplished to the uttermost. You know what this means? Our risen Christ is praying us home.

He's praying for us. His church around the world he's praying for the American church. He's praying for the church in Kenosha. What a great and glorious gathering that was.

Was that Thursday night or Friday night? Friday. What a joy singing and praying with the church of Kenosha but he is praying for Christ the King church interceding for us.

[25:00] Praying us through these hard times unto the Father. Today I choose Jesus because of what he's doing right now. Building his church interceding for us.

He is for us. If he gave himself for us how much more along with that will he do all things? but I also choose Jesus today because of what he will do.

We read throughout the New Testament and particularly in Revelation that Jesus is coming back and we are one day closer to his return. When he comes back he is going to decimate all that stand opposed to him and then he will judge all.

Each of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for our lives. Because of that day I choose Jesus today to live for him to seek to obey him and all that he commanded by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Remember the parable of the talents in Matthew 25? Talents are given to three servants. They go and vest it.

[26:37] One squanders it. They return. There is judgment. And for the first two who wisely use their talents they hear from their master well done good and faithful servant.

That's what I want to hear on that day. Well done Michael. Well done. I saw it. Saw what you did.

I saw Christ the King Church. Saw you all press into the moment. Not shrink back from it.

And then after he says well done and good and faithful servant he says enter the joy of your master.

You read at the end of Revelation of the new heavens and the new earth new Jerusalem a new creation no longer under bondage to decay we will see Jesus face to face.

We will feel his embrace. We will hear him with our own ears. And in the new heavens there is no more systemic racism.

[27:47] In the new heavens there are no more riots. There is no more looting. There is no more death. There is no more disease. There is ever present peace like a river.

It is where the lion lies down by the lamb. And there is where our Jesus is. He waits us and he is praying us home to him.

Which means we are passing through. This is not our final home. We are one day closer though.

Because of who Jesus is and because of what his work is, what he has done, what he is doing and what he will do, today I choose Jesus.

It is how we must move forward as a church in light of all these hard things we are facing. will you join me? Christ the King Church will you join me in choosing Jesus today?

But I wouldn't love you well if I didn't say there's some things you need to un-choose. In order for you to choose Jesus there's going to be some things you must deny in order to follow.

[29:04] we must deny un-choose carelessness of other people. Not giving a rip about people who are unlike us.

We must put that behind us in order for us to choose Jesus and move forward. So when you choose Jesus here's what happens. The Spirit of God will fill you with the heart of Jesus which is compassion towards all people who are like sheep without a shepherd distressed and downcast. It informs the way we engage people. So I know not all of us live in the same place. We live in different places in relationship to downtown Kenosha.

I know that. I know that not all of us experience kind of an inner city life. I know that. But all of us must be exercising the compassion of Jesus.

In order to do that you need to say no more to this carelessness of others. Which means compassion for black and brown ethnic minorities who just want to be heard.

[30:16] Who just want to be understood. Who want to have their experiences validated. We have compassion on law enforcement because they're in a very difficult position right now.

Very difficult. In fact many of us have been praying for John and Terry Tipman that God would open a door into the sheriff's department for them to minister to law enforcement husbands and wives in this stressful time.

We have compassion on people of different political persuasions because we all know that there's no political party that will deliver you from your sins.

We have we must say no to a carelessness towards others to say choose Jesus and have compassion on others.

Let me just roll through a couple other things you need to say no to in order to say yes to Jesus.

You need to say no to an inordinate fear. You must unchoose an inordinate fear for your personal safety, for your personal health, for your personal future.

[31:29] if you're more concerned about self preservation than Jesus glorification you've got something to say no to. We've got to say no to our complacency of our own kingdom building and we say yes to Jesus and being about the building of his kingdom of leveraging resources to that end.

We must say no. we must unchoose this cavalier pride and this is how it shows up. If you're more interested in being right than building up relationships you've got something to repent of to turn from in order to choose Jesus.

if you have a track record of speaking in ways that ruin relationships because you want to be right you've got to repent of that.

There's a time and a place to say oh I got to be faithful to Jesus and I got to stand on this truth let the chips of relationships fall where they may. But what I'm talking about is something different.

it's a pride of insisting on your own way and it can ruin relationships. You need to prevent you need to repent of that to choose Jesus and humble yourself.

[33:03] the last thing I want to call you to repentance of is chaos making.

When you choose Jesus you become one of his followers. Blessed are the peacemakers for they are sons of God.

Jesus calmed the sea. He brought calm to chaos and for many of us we experienced chaos internally before we became Christians and he brought peace like a river internally to us.

Brothers and sisters don't bring chaos to your relationships bring the calm. Bring Jesus calm. And that starts with experiencing his peace inside of you.

Isaiah 26 3. He gives perfect peace to those who set their minds on him. To those who trust in him.

[34:21] Brothers and sisters we're peacemakers. We're not chaos makers. We're to bring the calm. Not the chaos. Can I just encourage you along one line?

Use your dinner table as a peacemaking tool. Invite people into your home. Get to know them. Listen to them and understand them.

That's how we bring peace. By mutual understanding. By listening carefully. to love with your ears. You've got to unchoose these things in order to choose Jesus so that we can all move forward submitted to him.

We are his body under his headship walking in motion along the path that he has set out for us. We've been living in a state of crisis for about five and a half months.

many of us are weary. Many of us are sick of it. Many of us want to give up and get out. Other of us want to bow up and throw down.

[35:31] But we choose Jesus today who is the greatest peacemaker of all. And we bring peace. Can we just say it's not going to be the same moving forward.

It's not going to be the same. There's the mistake that we could think, hey it's just about cleaning up the city. Once we clean up the city of all of its glass and trash and plywood, then we go back to normal.

We don't go back to normal. We can clean it all up and yet there will still be things that need to be addressed and we want to do that out of the glory of Jesus. There will be still smoldering racial tension in our city.

And out of love for Jesus, let's be a part of addressing that with the gospel. COVID's not done. The investigation of Jacob Blake's not done. There are a lot of not dones. And Jesus is not done. He's not done in his work with us.

[36:44] Because of his person, because of his work, today I choose Jesus and so must you. Our goal is to be faithful to his call to make disciples of all the nations.

Starting in Kenosha. Now I want to give you some instructions of how we're going to move forward here. We're going to sing glorious Christ in a minute. But before we do, can I just encourage you just to take a minute to ask God to search you, to see if there's anything you need to un-choose in order to choose Jesus today to move forward with him as our head.

Would you take a minute and do work? Spirit of the living God, would you now do a work in convicting us of what we must repent of so that we can choose Jesus moving forward?

Take a minute. risen Christ, today we repent of our sins.

We confess, Lord Jesus, of areas in of our lives, whether it's carelessness or fear or some kind of building of our own kingdom or pride or chaos making.

[38:33] God, we confess them to you, Lord Jesus, and trust that once again you've washed us white as clean. Because if we confess our sins, you're faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Lord Jesus, we as your people choose you today. And if you give us tomorrow, we and joy will choose you again tomorrow. Now, God, I do pray that as a continuing work of your spirit, you would encourage us with one another.

That you would build us up as a church as we hear one another. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.