

Who do you say that I am

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[0 : 0 0] There are a number of striking questions in the Bible, aren't there? It's quite a lot. I remember someone asking me at a fellowship one time, what is the greatest question in the Bible?

And that in itself is a great question. It's a great thing to think about. What is the greatest question in the Bible? And perhaps you're thinking about different questions that might come into your head right now. We sang one of them just a few moments ago in Psalm 22.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? An unbelievable question, that. A wonderful question. The kind of question you can think about really your whole life and never fully understand the depths of it.

It's a question that takes us right into the heart of the sufferings and the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. A loaded question in many ways. A wonderful question.

Or you can maybe think of the Philippian jailer as well. It's another good question, isn't it? When the Philippian jailer, he runs into Paul and Silas and he asks them, but he pleads with them after the earthquake has happened.

[1 : 0 7] He pleads with them, what must I do to be saved? Such a basic question, but such an important question. What must I do to be saved?

A question that every single one of us needs to ask. And of course, a question that has a wonderful answer as well. But in the passage that I want to look at today here in Mark chapter 8, we have an equally important question.

And a very probing question here, where Jesus turns to his disciples there in verse 29 of Mark chapter 8, and they are asked, Who do you say that I am?

That's a great question. Who do you say that I am? That's a probing question. That's a very direct question. And it's the kind of question that makes you ask yourself, Well, what do I actually think about Jesus?

You see, you might not want to ask yourself that question. You might not want to think what you actually think of Jesus. But this kind of question, it makes you ask yourself that. And as we look at this text today, that question is going out to every one of us.

[2 : 1 2] Who is it? But Jesus is speaking to us and saying, Who do you say that I am? What do you actually think of the Lord Jesus Christ? So let's look at this passage here together this morning.

And the section that I want to really look at is from verse 27 down to verse 33. That section there, from verse 27 down to verse 33. And that section there, that's a real turning point in the Gospel of Mark.

When you're reading through the Gospel of Mark, this is one of these turning points. It's a climactic moment, really, in the Gospel itself. Now, I read from the beginning of chapter 1 for a reason.

If you can just quickly turn back to chapter 1. And the very first verse there, just to explain why the passage that we're looking at today is a real turning point.

In verse 1, the very beginning of the Gospel, before we get any other information, the Gospel writer tells us here, The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[3 : 19] So at the very outset, Mark is telling us exactly who Jesus is. At the very outset, he's telling us, This is Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God.

So his identity is crystal clear from the outset. There's no doubt about it. There's no real introduction as such. It's straight into the identity of who Jesus actually is.

And really, the subsequent passages after that is all about Jesus then revealing this identity to other people. He's going around and showing people who he is.

We are told at the very beginning who he is. But those he comes into contact with, They don't have verse 1 of the Gospel of Mark. And the rest of the Gospel is him showing this identity to others.

But here in chapter 8, which is what we're looking at here, This is really the first time that someone actually confesses Jesus to be the Messiah.

[4 : 13] The very first time in the Gospel of Mark that someone confesses him to be the Christ. We have been seeing him slowly revealing himself through his healings and through his miracles and his teachings and things like that.

We've been slowly seeing his identity coming out. But this is the first time that somebody actually says it. That somebody actually says, You are the Christ. And that's what you have here.

This climax moment where Peter says, You are the Christ. So there's a real climax here. From the beginning of the Gospel to this point, You've been waiting for someone to see this.

You've been waiting for someone to say, Yes indeed, you are the Christ. You are the Messiah. And here finally we reach that. So there's a climax here. But as well as this being a climactic moment, This is also, as I mentioned, a turning point.

Because just as the narrative is building up from the beginning, And it's building up to this point where someone actually finally confesses Jesus to be the Messiah.

[5 : 16] After this point, The trajectory of the Gospel narrative takes up a bit of a dip. And then you start to see this downward trajectory.

Because this passage here, It not only contains the first confession of the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here in this passage, We also have the very first mention of the impending death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's been no word of it up until this point. There's been no explicit word about the sufferings and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Up until this point. So we've hit this climax moment where someone confesses Jesus to be the Messiah.

And then all of a sudden we find ourselves on this downward trajectory into the death and into the sufferings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So what I want to do in this passage today is I just want to look at two things.

I want to look at this climactic confession. And then I want to look at this downward descent. This climactic confession of Peter. And then the beginning of this downward descent as we begin to see into the mission of the Messiah.

[6 : 29] His death and the suffering and of course his subsequent resurrection as well. So first of all, let's look at this climactic confession. And you have that in verse 27 to verse 30 there.

And here Jesus, he is on a journey with his disciples. He has been on many a journey with his disciples. And very often these journeys were opportunities for Jesus to have perhaps more intimate and personal discourse with his disciples.

You know, the crowds weren't around. The crowds weren't looking for healing by this point. So he has an opportunity to speak more directly and perhaps more frankly with them. And here at some point on this journey that they are on, we see that in verse 27 there, Jesus, he turns to his disciples and he asks them that question there.

Who do people say that I am? Who do people say that I am? Now, that particular question there, it's not a direct question, is it?

It's not necessarily a personal question. He's saying, what do others say that I am? That's an easier question to ask. What do other people think? What are other people saying? It's interesting how he begins the conversation there.

[7 : 42] He doesn't go straight for the jugular. He doesn't go straight for the direct question. He starts off very general. Keeping the conversation general. What do other people say that I am? Before he eventually moves on to the very direct question and the probing question and the personal question, which he is coming to.

And the Lord knows he's coming to it. That's not how he begins. He starts it off general before he then begins to build up to this more specific question. So, the disciples, they come out with a list of the people who others say that Jesus is.

And there's a few of them noted there. We see that some people think that Jesus is John the Baptist. So, that's one option, that he's John the Baptist. Now, you might remember that Herod, he actually came to this conclusion back in chapter 6.

Remember, Herod killed John the Baptist. And when he heard about Jesus, he started thinking that this was John the Baptist come back from the dead. And when you're reading that passage in chapter 6, you can perhaps think that Herod's being a bit irrational.

You know, thinking that the man whose head he has cut off has somehow been reincarnated. You wonder to yourself when you're reading it, you know, really? Does Herod honestly believe in this? But when you look at this passage, Herod's not alone.

[9 : 00] It seems to be the case that quite a number of people think that Jesus is actually John the Baptist. That's the very first name that the disciples say. Some people say that you are John the Baptist.

So, that's one of the options. And another option, the other person they say is that Jesus must be Elijah. So, that's a second option. So, John the Baptist, the first one.

The second one, Elijah. Now, the reason for them thinking that Jesus is Elijah is because of a very specific verse at the very end of the Old Testament.

At the very, pretty much the very last sentence in the book of Malachi, it reads as follows. It says, Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

That's pretty much the last version. The book of Malachi and the last version of the Old Testament as we have it ordered just now. So, these people, they're expecting a prophet like Elijah.

[10 : 04] They're expecting someone to come like Elijah, an Elijah-like prophet. And some of them obviously think that Jesus is this Elijah-like prophet. This must be the person that the prophet was speaking about.

This is him. This is Elijah. Now, for these people, they are at the very least basing their understanding on scripture. So, they're doing better than the people who were saying Jesus was John the Baptist because they are basing their understanding on scripture.

But the problem is that they're homing in on this one particular verse about Elijah, whilst at the same time, they're ignoring the myriads of other verses that clearly speak about the coming Messiah, the coming Lord, the coming Savior.

They're ignoring all those verses and they're homing very much in on this one verse about Elijah. So, these people, they are misinterpreting scripture. So, some people are saying he's John the Baptist.

Other people are saying he's Elijah. And then at the end of verse 28 there, you see that others aren't quite as specific. They keep it more general. And they say that he is just one of the prophets.

[11 : 08] So, you see how blinkered people are as to the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ and their understanding of who Jesus is. And the same is true today. That has not changed.

If you ask people today who is Jesus, you will get a whole host of different responses. Some people will respond and they will say that Jesus didn't even exist.

Perhaps some people in here would take that view. I think it's fair to say it's a minority of people that would hold to that view. It's very hard to argue that there wasn't a religious figure known as Jesus.

You know, with all the historical evidence and records that we have even out with the Bible, it's hard to argue that Jesus didn't exist. But some people might say that. They might say that just Jesus didn't exist.

But most people say that he did exist. But you might have a whole host of different ideas as to who this Jesus actually was. So, that's one option. But he just didn't exist at all. Now, C.S. Lewis, a fairly well-known Christian writer of the past, he famously gives us another three options.

[12 : 13] He gives us three options. And he bases this on the fact that if you assume that the Bible is true and you assume that what we have in the accounts of the Gospels are true, you have three options.

Either Jesus is a liar, or Jesus is a lunatic, or Jesus is Lord. That's the three options that C.S. Lewis gives.

In other words, that Jesus is either lying about his identity, he's lying about who he says he is, lying about what he said he's done, or that he's a lunatic, that he's delusional, that he actually does think he's the Son of God and the Messiah, but that he isn't.

And you get people, even today, who think like this. You get people, even today, who think that they're the Son of God, who think that they're the Christ. People who are deluded. So, that's one option. Either he's a liar, he's deluded, he's a lunatic, or that he is actually the Lord.

That's the three options. If you take the assertions of Scripture, you have to say that one of these things is true. Either a liar, a lunatic, or he is actually who he says he is, that he is the Lord himself.

[13 : 16] So, that's some other options. But some see elements of the true identity of Jesus without recognizing his full identity.

And this is actually quite common. And I suspect that for quite a few of you in here who aren't the Lord's, this might be where you stand. That you see elements of the Lord's identity, but you don't see his true identity of who he is.

You see him as a good man, a wise man, a teacher, a great man even, a unique man perhaps. But yet you don't see him for who he is. The Christ, the Son of God, your Lord and your Messiah.

You don't see him in that sense at all. And lots of people can fall into that category. Muslims, for example, fall into that category as well. Because famously, of course, they see Jesus as a prophet.

And they take Jesus actually very seriously. I read somewhere recently that nobody is more referenced in the Quran than Jesus. It's quite surprising. I thought that was quite surprising anyway.

- [14 : 18] There's no more referenced person in the whole of Quran than Jesus. So, they have a great respect for Jesus. But they only see him as a prophet, just like anyone else. They don't see his true identity at all.

And you can think of JW's, Mormons as well. People who see the humanity of Jesus, but they don't see the divinity of Jesus. So, there's a whole host of people that see elements, perhaps, of the identity of Christ.

But they fail to see the true identity of who the Lord Jesus is. So, there's a diversity of opinion and beliefs about who Jesus is. That was the case back then, in the days of the disciples.

And it's still absolutely the case today. And as I was saying, there may be a wide range of opinions here, or beliefs here, as to who you actually think Jesus is.

But then, Jesus, he gets to the crucial question there in verse 29. He's heard what others think. But then he says, but who do you say that I am?

- [15 : 15] So, now it's not about, you know, what other people think. Who do you say that I am? All of a sudden, the question becomes very personal and very probing as well.

And really, that is the most important question that you will ever have to answer. In your whole life, who do you say that Jesus actually is? And it's the kind of question that can change the dynamics of a conversation entirely, can't it?

You can imagine it changing the dynamics of this conversation completely. You know, it's one thing. If you're not the Lord's today, if you don't have faith in the Lord, you might be quite content in talking about God.

You might be quite content in talking about the Bible and talking about the things of God. You might be very comfortable doing that. But as soon as you get a question like this, that changes the dynamic of the conversation.

Changes it. Who do you say Jesus is? It's no longer about what other people think. It's no longer general. Now it's who do you say that Jesus is? And that changes the dynamic of any conversation because it's so direct and it's so personal and it gets to the very heart of the matter as to who you actually think Jesus is.

- [16 : 27] It's one thing to come along to church and to hear about Jesus. It's one thing to know what other people think of Jesus. But what do we think? What do you think? Who do you say that I am?

And you know, sometimes that question there from Jesus, sometimes it needs to be asked, doesn't it? It needs to be asked. Not always. You don't always ask every relative of everyone who you come into contact with, or who do you say Jesus is?

But there comes a time when you need to ask that. There comes a time when you need to be direct and say, who do you actually think Jesus is? You, not other people. It's time to be direct.

And that's what the Lord does here. Now you see, for the disciples here, this was really decision time. Decision time. They've seen a lot.

And if you've read the first eight chapters, you'll see that. They've seen a lot. They have heard a lot. They have been with Jesus for months and months and months by this point. And things were going to get difficult from now on.

- [17 : 28] Persecution was going to increase. Things were going to get difficult. And it's as though Jesus is saying to them here, right, before we go any further, I want to ask you this question. Before we go any further, it's time for you to decide.

It's time for you to decide, are you going to commit yourself to me? Or are you going to walk away? Are you going to put your faith in me and confess me for who I am? Or are you going to walk away?

Are you going to continue to be a bystander on the outside looking in on my mission? Or are you going to confess who I am and take part in this mission with me?

This was a crunch moment. And the Lord had been building up to this. A crunch moment for the disciples here. And, you know, the Lord sometimes brings us face to face with crunch moments like that in our own lives.

You know, sometimes he brings us face to face with a stark question like this. You might have seen a lot. And I think many of you in here have seen a lot in terms of the Lord's work and the Lord's hand.

[18 : 29] I know that many of you have heard a lot. Most of you, I'm sure, have been to church multiple times. You've heard a lot about the Lord Jesus Christ. You've heard a lot about the gospel.

But there comes a moment where you actually have to decide. You know, the Lord sometimes orchestrates providence so that you actually have to make a decision. You know, are you going to keep on the outside, on the periphery, watching in, interested?

Or are you going to commit and confess this man as your Lord and Savior? Are you going to take him? And are you going to bow before him as your Lord and as your Savior?

The Lord sometimes brings these moments out weigh. And it can happen in different ways. But the Lord can do just that. And that's what he does here. He asks him very directly, who do you say that Jesus is?

And that is a question that you need to really answer. Think about that right now. You know, if someone asked you, who do you say Jesus is? What would you say? I'm not suggesting you tell anyone.

[19 : 29] But, you know, in your heart, what would you say? How would you answer that? Yourself. Who do you say Jesus is? Because the answer to that question, your whole life depends on that. The eternal well-being of your soul depends on the answer to that question.

And I hope and I pray that the Spirit would open your eyes and that you would be able to answer that question by saying, he is the Lord. He is the Messiah. And not just the Lord. That he is my Lord.

That he is my Messiah. And that he is my Savior. Because that is what we must see in order to be saved. So who do you say that Jesus is?

Well, here, Peter, Peter is always the first one to speak up, isn't he? He is very quick to speak up. And he says here, you are the Christ.

He confesses Jesus as the Messiah that the Old Testament had promised. That is a huge moment. Massive moment. Remember, it was not that long ago they were in a boat.

[20 : 27] And they were on the sea. And they were in a storm. And Jesus calmed the storm. And the disciples, including Peter, they were looking at Jesus and they were asking themselves, who is this?

Who even is this man? That even the wind and the waves themselves obey him. Who is he? But now, here, now Peter sees who he is.

And he confesses him here. You are the Christ. Up until now, it's only God and the demons who have recognized this. It's quite ironic that the demons recognized it before the people.

That's the truth, isn't it? God and the demons themselves, the evil spirits, they recognized Jesus. But nobody else has until this moment here. And now, Peter, he confesses Jesus to be the Christ.

So that's this climactic confession in the gospel. It's been building from verse 1. And now, finally, you have it here. Someone confesses him. So you have a climactic confession.

[21 : 28] But secondly, we begin to see Jesus here beginning his downward descent. Because straight after this climactic confession, you have this picture of this downward descent to death itself.

You see, Peter was right. He was right in saying that Jesus was the Messiah. He was right in saying that Jesus was the Christ. But the problem was that the people in this day and even the people before this day, they had a wrong idea of what the mission of the Messiah was going to be.

They didn't actually understand what it was that the Christ was actually going to do. You see, they thought that the Messiah or the Christ was going to be someone who was going to restore the kingdom of Israel in a political sense.

They thought that this Messiah figure that was going to come would be a figure that would be strong in political power, perhaps even strong in military power. That's what they were envisaging.

That's what the people generally envisaged. So when Peter here, when he confesses Jesus as the Messiah, he no doubt expects after that moment that he would be following Jesus and he would see Jesus rise in ascendancy in an earthly and a political sense.

[22 : 44] And that Peter would almost ride this wave as he follows the Messiah and as the Messiah rises in stature and earthly power and glory. And he's seen the Pharisees and the scribes reject him thus far.

But no doubt, Peter and the disciples after this, no doubt they would have thought, right, once Jesus rises in stature, once he rises in prominence, these Pharisees and these scribes, they'll come on board.

They'll all come on board. We'll all see that this is the Messiah. And the only way is up. The only way is up. Things have been quite difficult up until now, but now it's going to be different. The only way is up.

But for Peter and for the rest of the disciples here, they're in for a shock, a massive shock. Because the role of the Messiah here, the mission of the Messiah was not going to be an upward path of earthly glory and earthly power.

It was going to be a downward path. A downward path of humiliation. A downward trajectory of suffering. A descent down into the very depths of death itself.

[23 : 51] They were not expecting that. They were not expecting that at all. But that's what Jesus tells them there in verse 31 to 33. He's telling them, yes, you're right.

I am the Messiah. I am the Messiah. But my mission is not going to be a mission of earthly glory. It's going to be a mission of earthly suffering. Earthly suffering. And he says there in verse 31, I must suffer many things.

Now what a shock that would have been for them to hear that. A suffering Messiah. We assume. We think of passages like Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22.

And we can't but see a suffering Messiah. When we come to scripture, it's so obvious to us. But that's not how they thought. See, they didn't equate this suffering servant image of Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22.

They didn't equate that person there to the Messiah. They didn't make that connection at all. So this was a complete shock to them. Complete shock.

[24 : 53] And you'll notice Jesus, he isn't saying here, I will suffer many things. Or he's not even saying I may suffer many things. He's saying I must.

I must suffer. It is absolutely necessary that I suffer. He's telling them, it's not a case of I'm going to go through this mission of saving my people.

And a byproduct of this is that I'm going to suffer. Or that an unfortunate consequence of this is that I'm going to suffer. That's not the point. That is the whole purpose and reason that he has come.

It's not just something that's unfortunately going to happen to him. It is necessary that he suffers because that's the whole reason he has come. He has come in order to suffer. And in order to suffer for his people.

And when you keep reading, you see that it's not just suffering, but it's rejection as well. It's going to be rejected. As I mentioned, they've already seen the scribes and the Pharisees and others rejecting.

[25 : 53] Jesus. And as I mentioned, they may well have thought that that was going to turn around once Jesus would rise and statue. But Jesus is telling them here, no. You think the rejection has been bad up until now?

It's going to get a whole lot worse. I am going to be utterly rejected by these religious figures. Don't think that they're going to come on board. Not at all. They will utterly reject me.

And they won't just reject me. He says they will kill me. They're going to kill me. And that would have just taken the wind completely out of their sails. This is just not what they were expecting to hear.

You're going to die. You're going to suffer. You're going to be rejected. Peter has just announced and confessed Jesus. He's just confessed him as the Christ. And in their eyes, things were only going to get better.

And now Jesus is telling them, no. It's not like that at all. I am going to suffer. I am going to die. And of course, after that, I am going to be resurrected.

[26 : 55] It's a total shock to them. They weren't expecting that. And you know how often God goes against our expectations? Is that not true? So often that happens. We have our own expectations all the time about how life is going to go, how our Christian walk is going to go, how perhaps easy it's going to be when we become a Christian.

But very often, our expectations are corrected by the Lord. Very often, our expectations are wrong. And here, that is absolutely the case.

Now, we haven't actually heard anything about the suffering or the death of the Lord Jesus Christ up until this point. I mentioned that earlier on.

And now, all of a sudden, as soon as someone declares Jesus to be the Messiah, now Jesus decides to tell them. Now, Jesus decides to open up about his role, about his death, and about his suffering, about all these things.

Now, why is that? Why did he not tell them at the very beginning? Why does he wait until now? Well, there's just many elements and actually many reasons for why he waits until now.

[28 : 04] But one important reason is that you cannot appreciate the work of Christ unless you understand the person of Christ. You know, in theological terms, the work of Christ is his death, his atoning, suffering on the cross.

That's what we call the work of Christ. You cannot understand that unless you understand his person, his identity, who he actually is. You know, I could tell you today all about the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But unless you actually understand who he is, unless you see who he is, his death is going to be absolutely meaningless to you. His identity is absolutely crucial for you understanding about his death and appreciating his death.

That's probably why you're able to sit under the preaching of Christ crucified and the sufferings of Jesus and it not really affect you. If you're outside of the Lord today. That's why you can do that because you don't really see who he is.

You don't see his identity. You don't see the one who is actually suffering. And therefore, when you're hearing about his death and his suffering, it doesn't really impact you in any way at all. Now, over these last few days and these last few weeks, really, we've been hearing much about the victims of the Isle Air disaster.

[29 : 23] And it has, I think it's fair to say, filled us with a sense of deep grief and sorrow to hear some of the stories, particularly the individual stories. It's one thing to hear a generalized version of the tragedy, but it's another thing to hear individual stories about how individuals died or even how individuals survived.

Amazing stories, tragic stories as well. And it does, it causes a deep sense of sorrow and grief. But when you find out that you're related to one of them, and for many people over these past few weeks, many people had no idea that they were related to some of these people who died and who perished on that Isle Air disaster.

But over the last few weeks, a lot of people have become aware of that. I've become aware of people in my own family that I had no idea any connections with at all with the Isle Air disaster. And when you find out that there's a connection there, it adds a different layer, doesn't it, to that sense of sorrow and grief?

Without a shadow of a doubt, when you realize there's a blood connection, some kind of connection, it adds something to it. And in a sense, the same is true with the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To understand the significance of the death of Jesus, you have to understand who he is. You have to understand his identity. You have to see him as the Messiah. You have to see him as your Lord.

[30 : 46] You have to see him as your Savior. Until you see him as that, you can never fully understand his death. Until you see that you have a connection with him, it's only then that you understand his death.

His identity is something you must see. The Spirit must open your eyes to see that. The Spirit must open your eyes and your heart to behold this man as the Messiah and your Lord and your Savior.

And all of a sudden, now when you hear about his death, it's a completely different story. It touches you. You're connected with it. It's very different indeed. And if you don't see who Jesus is, you're never going to appreciate his death.

You'll sit here and hear about it all your life long. And you'll never be touched by it. You will never be affected by it. You must see who he is. And that's one of the reasons. There's multiple reasons.

But that's one of the reasons why Jesus doesn't tell his disciples about his suffering and death until now. Until now. Once they see who he is, only then are they ready to hear about exactly what it is that he's going to do.

[31 : 49] But of course, Peter, he's not having any of it at all. And typical Peter going from one extreme to the other. We've just commended him for his remarkable confession.

And now we see him going out and rebuking Jesus. You know, you can't even imagine doing that, rebuking Jesus. He's rebuking Jesus. And he's telling Jesus, no, you're not going to die.

You're not going to suffer. That is not the way it's going to happen. You see, for Peter, he was okay confessing Jesus as Messiah. But he wants the Messiahship of Jesus to be according to his expectations.

Again, much like ourselves. You know, when we come to faith, when it comes to matters of the church or matters of our own providence, we want things to happen according to our expectations rather than coming under the word of God.

And that's what Peter's doing here. He wants things to happen according to what he thinks. But he needs to understand that the path of the Christ is going to be a path of suffering. That is the only way that the Lord could save his people from themselves walking down a path of eternal suffering.

[32 : 59] The only way that Jesus could save his people from that was for himself to walk down that path of suffering. That is the only two options. Because of sin and because of the justice of God, that path of suffering must be trodden.

And the question is, will we walk down it ourselves and into a lost eternity of suffering? Or will we allow the Lord to walk that way for us? That's the choice here.

That's the choice in the gospel. That's the question. Will we put our faith and trust in Christ and allow him, as it were, to take those sufferings for us? Or if we don't do that, then we must walk down that path ourselves.

And when we walk down it, we walk down it for all eternity. So here, Peter had to realize that the only way was for Christ to take this path of suffering.

And in this passage here, it's the first time we see it. Now, of course, there's a sense in which Christ's path has always been directed to the cross. From glory itself right the way through to Golgotha, it's been one journey.

[34 : 04] But here, this is the first point where it becomes visible on the outside. This is the first time it becomes visible to those reading or to those present there. It's not obvious before then.

Now, all of a sudden, you see his face steadfastly towards the cross, towards the sufferings, towards his death. And now, when you follow on through the rest of the gospel of Mark, he's going in a very direct way to the cross, to Jerusalem, and to the sufferings there.

This is a pivotal passage, a pivotal moment. So it's a turning point in the gospel. We have this climactic confession of who Jesus is, and then the beginning of this downward descent to death itself.

It is a hinge moment in the gospel. And it's a hinge moment where we find the person and the work of Christ quite clearly explained to us. And my prayer is that this passage, it wouldn't just be a hinge moment and a narrative, but that it would be a hinge moment for ourselves and for each one of you in here today.

That this would be a hinge moment in your life. That you would see the identity and the person of who the Lord is, and that you would see his work and his death and his suffering, and that you would be able to see that as for yourself.

[35 : 22] That the Spirit of God might open your heart and open your eyes, so that you might take the Lord by faith, by putting your faith in him, and take him as your Lord and your Savior.

That's a hinge moment that every single one of us needs. And only the Spirit can open those eyes. And our prayer is that he would do just that with each one of us here.

Let's pray.