

# The Great Question

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] by singing praise to God's name from Psalm 111. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 111. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 111.

Singing verses 1 down to verse 4. Psalm 111, verses 1 down to verse 4. Praise ye the Lord with my whole heart. I will God's praise declare.

Where the assemblies of the just and congregations are. The whole works of the Lord our God are great above all measure. Sought out the hour of everyone that doth therein take pleasure.

Psalm 111, verses 1 to 4. To God's praise. Praise ye the Lord with my whole heart.

My dear Lord with my whole heart. I will God's praise here. There is the Lord with my whole heart. There is the Lord with my whole heart.

[ 1 : 10 ] Like what's that just and pours everywhere. The heart. The heart. The voice of Christ The voice of grace Thank you.

It works on your heaven, most glorious, thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. It is not.

Shalom. Let's join together in a word of prayer.

Lord, we come before you this day and we are reminded, as we have sung just now, that we come before a God who is great, a God who is glorious, a God whose power and whose majesty is beyond full description.

[ 3 : 49 ] We also come just now to a God who is full of compassion. As we sing these words, we do not sing empty, meaningless words. We mean every word we sing, that we come just now to a God who has cared and shown eternal care for his people in so many different glorious ways.

But again and again, even throughout our own individual lives, those of us who know and who seek to serve you, you have shown your goodness towards us in ways immeasurable.

As we come this week, especially this week of Thanksgiving, help us to be a thankful people. We know that with many gracious givings and with all the good things you do and show towards us, often we forget to be thankful.

Often perhaps we take for granted the many good things that we have. Lord, we ask that you would show us once more and help us once more to be truly thankful for all the good gifts you give us.

The many gifts of grace. The many ways you offer us peace. The many ways you are with us day by day. We acknowledge that every breath we take, every second of life we have, is truly a gift from you.

[ 5 : 08 ] We come just now this day thanking you for the great gift of this time together. As week after week and time after time we gather together as a family.

As brothers and sisters join together to worship our risen Lord, we ask you to help us never to grow too used to this time of gathering. Help us never to grow too acquainted with it.

Help us to understand that as we come together just now, we're not just doing this out of ritual. We're not just doing this because it's what we do. As we come together just now around your word, we are drawing alongside you the place where you have called your home, the hearts of your people.

As we gather just now together, your word tells us that you are present here because you have made your home in and with and through your people. That this moment you are dwelling in us.

And because that is true, we can say and say for certain that you are here. Not in an abstract, strange way, but you are here at this moment.

[ 6 : 17 ] And as your word is read, you work your power through your word and you are here through that. As your praises are sung just now, as we lift our voices and proclaim your glory and your majesty, you receive that praise.

You receive that glory. We worship a God who is close to us just now. And as your presence, as it were, is in this place, is known in this place, Lord, we ask that to be the case today.

We're not asking, Lord, for a physical manifestation. We're not asking for some feeling of anything of any sort. We're just asking for that sure hope and knowledge that we come today to worship a true and living God who is with his people whenever and wherever they meet to worship together.

Help us to have a sense of that holiness of the presence with which we come before. The holiness of a God who has declared that you are holy. A holiness that shows us that we are not holy.

A holiness that is so perfect that shows every imperfection in our attempts at holiness. We come just now confessing we're unclean. There are some here we know who would never confess that.

[ 7 : 32 ] There are some here who think they are clean before you. Lord, we pray for them on their behalf. A prayer they will not pray for themselves, but albeit a prayer that is true.

We are unclean before you today. We have sinned before you today. We have done what is wrong before you today and this past week. And we come bringing that uncleanness.

We come bringing that sin. We come bringing all these shortcomings before you. And we come to you, the holy, eternally righteous God in whom there is no darkness to be found.

And we lay these things and we say that we are undone. We are totally undone. That in and of ourselves we have no help and we have no hope. But with all that being said, we come today relying on the finished work of our Saviour and in His name.

And in His finished work, we come just now confessing that we have no power, but He has eternal power. That we are unclean, but He is eternally perfectly clean.

[ 8 : 39 ] That we are unholy, but He is holy. And we are covered in His holiness. We are covered in His righteousness. We are covered by His perfection. In His strength we come and we ask these many petitions this day.

So in His strength we come just now and we pray for ourselves as a congregation. We pray just now for your people here, those who know you and who love you. Those who are worshipping you here at this very moment.

We thank you for this gathering here. We also remember our dear brothers and sisters who cannot be here today and who are not here for various reasons. We ask you be with them and Lord you would encourage them.

We ask just now especially for our brothers. We think just now especially our two eldest of our elders who are laid aside just now. We ask you be with them.

Be with them in their times of illness and their times of distance. Encourage them we ask even though they cannot attend perhaps in means of grace as often as they would like to.

[ 9 : 41 ] They would know that they are not forgotten by us but more importantly than that they would know that they are not forgotten by you. We pray just now for every one of our number who are going through hard times and as it were dark times.

You alone and they alone know. We pray just now for those suffering illness, those suffering pain, mental and physical. Those who are going through situations that are hard and that are dark and that are deeply troublesome for your people.

Lord they would be reminded that in you they have their hope and they have their strength. We pray just now for our friends here today. Those who have attended the means of grace for many years.

Those who have come to this church building for many years but who as of yet have not given themselves over to you. Who as of yet have not fallen down before you.

Who as of yet cannot say that they know nor that they love Jesus. Who as of yet have not accepted the free gift of salvation but is offered to them week after week.

[ 10 : 44 ] We ask Lord that even this day even this day would be the day that they hear and see perhaps the first time that Jesus has come and he has purchased for them forgiveness.

If only they would come and lay themselves down before you. That there is nothing stopping them this day but their own self-righteousness. There is nothing stopping them today but their own excuses if only they would come.

Come and receive for themselves the free gift of salvation that is given to all who will come and receive it. We pray that same prayer for our wider community.

We pray Lord you use us as salt and light in this place to be gospel witnesses to bring your word to this place. Help us to be faithful witnesses. Help us to be bold in our testimony and to be bold in our witnessing.

Help us to be gentle at the same time. To be careful in what we say and how we say it. We pray Lord for all the good gospel work that goes on behind the scenes.

[ 11 : 45 ] We pray for the ongoing witness of all your people in this place. We pray just now for all the events even of the next few weeks. We pray for ourselves this week. We pray Lord for the Thanksgiving evening we would truly come with hearts ready to give thanks.

We pray for what must take place the following evening on Thursday with the POV visit. We pray Lord for that committee as they make their preparations as they do the many, many hours of paperwork that's associated and attached to this meeting.

We pray for ourselves as a Kirk session as a deacon's court as a gathering of membership as a wider church gathering that this would be a time that's beneficial for us and beneficial overall to the gospel cause in this place.

We pray Lord for the carol event being planned as we see that as a real event of outreach. We ask that you would bring many as they hear a simple gospel message they perhaps even hear for the first time the true reality that a saviour came to save sinners of which they are one.

We also pray going forward for our Bible study plan the fellowships planned for all the many things that we seek to plan. Lord we ask you would be in all of it. We plan and we work things out and we struggle with the details and we have all these ideas and ambitions but we lay them once more before your throne because we know that if you're not in it the thing will not prosper unless you build up the wall unless you build up the whole building the building will crumble the labourers labour in vain we ask that we not be labouring in vain help us of one heart and one mind to serve you well in this place we thank you for our sense of unity as a congregation that you have given us a united heart with different ideas and different understandings perhaps but one goal to see Christ glorified in this area to see Christ known in North Tolstair to see his name praised in every part of this village in every home in every area

[ 13 : 54 ] Lord help us not to find rest in ourselves until we strive to see his name known and glorified help us to have that restlessness of spirit that helps us to keep on pushing forward to keep on serving you with joy and thanksgiving as we pray for ourselves we remember Greenock in our time of vacancy we also remember Wick and Kiltarn or Edmonton we pray for them or we ask the ongoing work often that ongoing work in hard places we remember especially the northern presbytery Lord you alone know the struggle that your servants and your people have in that place that place which seems to be so hard to the gospel so unwilling to hear the gospel message Lord we ask you bless your word in these places that we again see days of renewal and days of revival in that area that area was once so bright through the gospel where your word spread from all the way down that northern coast all the way down the east side

Lord we ask again you would see we would see days of blessing days of outpouring of your spirit pray for the same for ourselves here Lord we know that by human effort we can save no one that by hours of preaching and hours of evangelism that we ourselves cannot save anyone but by doing so we are seeking to point everyone in all places all men and all women and all boys and all girls we encounter we point them to the one who can save who does save the Lord Jesus Christ then his power we come this day we can't even through the multitude of our words we cannot save a single soul but you can and you do and we are here today as living evidence that you save your people you claim them and you bring them back to yourself even though we are often poor examples in our own life and walk and witness even though we are often such poor examples what it is to be loved and to love our saviour we ask you would use us nevertheless to glorify you we pray once more for our people here today our dear friends our loved ones here today who perhaps are so close who are so close to finally after so many years so close to admitting to themselves that we need a saviour who are so close to coming to Jesus and finding that hope and that help and that forgiveness and that mercy and that peace and that love who are so close this day we ask that in this sermon as we look at your word together in this short time together they would not hear my word they would only hear your word as it is preached to them as your word encourages them once more to come to a saviour who has bled and died and rose again for them who is eternally at your right hand making intercession for all your people for this day they would come and have him and know him and hold him and worship him and love him as their king their saviour their elder brother and their friend we pray for our island we pray for our wider nation we pray Lord for ourselves in strange days and in dark days give us guidance we ask we ought to pray for guidance for our leadership for our governments for all over us in secular matters

Lord that you would be with them we pray especially once more for your people in these places that they would know your word and that they would be encouraged by it pray for the salvation of our king the salvation of our first minister and prime minister Lord we ask you to work in their lives and bring them to a saving knowledge of yourself help us Lord until the end comes to serve you well to serve you faithfully to be found as faithful good servants willing to lay even our lives on the lines that were for our king we remember just now as we come to an end of our times we remember our commitment and indeed it is a commitment as a congregation to love and look after as best we can and provide as best we can to Oweka pray not just for himself we also pray for the wider family situation the wider community situation Lord after these few years and these many years at times of supporting him Lord we ask that you would keep that support going in his community in his congregation that he would know that there is a gathering of your people elsewhere in this world who love him and who remember him and who want to bless him as best we can pray for him today as we read and hear of in the latest account that he is attending a place of worship

Lord we pray for him just now and pray for that place of worship that your word goes out there as your word goes out bless him and bless all his hearers a reminder we are part of a worldwide church of different cultures and languages different stories and backgrounds but united in our one saviour it's in his name and it's for his sake we ask for his many things Amen let's read Mark chapter 8 Mark chapter 8 we're coming to the conclusion of our series just now for a while in Mark we've been doing good progress for quite a while now it's time for a break our second break in the series we'll God willing pick Mark up in the new year again but later on in the new year I should say Mark chapter 8 we can read from verse 27 to the end Mark chapter 8 and verse 27 it's a short section let's hear

God's word and Jesus went with his disciples to the village of Caesarea Philippi and the way he asked his disciples who do people say that I am and they told him John the Baptist and others say Elijah and others one of the prophets and he asked them but who do you say that I am Peter answered him you are the Christ and he strictly charged them to tell no one about him he began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again and he said this plainly and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him but turning and seeing his disciples he rebuked Peter and said get behind me Satan for you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man and calling the crowd to him with his disciples he said to them if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul for whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him will the son of man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with the holy angels and he said to them truly I say to you there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after has come with power amen and so on we give praise as always to God for his holy and his perfect word before we come back to this passage let's again sing to God's praise this time from Sing

[ 22 : 07 ] Psalms Sing Psalms and Psalm 22 Sing Psalms Psalm 22 of course this is the great messianic psalm singing and prophesying of the death the suffering of our saviour sing Psalms Psalm 22 we can sing verses 1 down to verse 4 of verse 5 sorry of the psalm four verses Psalm 22 1 down to verse 5 my God my God oh why have you forsaken and abandoned me why are you far from giving help from listening to my anguished plea Psalm 22 verses 1 to 5 four stans God's praise praise my God I don't know why

I live forsake the love thou know me why I live home handing from heaven I give you welcome ho ■■■ go to John my yea what want him fantastic thing I believe may you have lo have come When I bowed in, I bowed to you, to open my heart in silence, I bowed with you.

I bowed with you, I bowed with you. I bowed with you, I bowed with you.

In your power, truth and cross, make us be done when all is sold.

I bowed with you, I bowed with you. You listen to me, I bowed with you.

[ 25 : 20 ] I bowed with you, I bowed with you. I bowed with you, because of you, in our free land.

Let's, for a short time, turn back to the chapter we had there, Mark chapter 8. Mark 8, looking really at verses 27 down to verse 38.

Mark 8, 27 down to verse 38. Really asking and seeing the answer, hopefully, of a simple question we find in verse 29.

Where Jesus asks, but who do you say that I am? And Peter answered him, you are the Christ. And so we're coming to a, not an end, but a break in our study in the series in Mark.

And at this point, we find Jesus now fully explaining. And we see here in plain words, in simple ways, fully explaining to the disciples just who he is.

[ 26 : 50 ] They've seen the miracles countless times. They've seen the healings. They've seen the feeding of the 5,000, the feeding of the 4,000. They've seen the dead raised to life, or some of them have.

They've seen healings upon healings. They've seen Jesus answer the Pharisees and scribes. They've seen it all. And at this point, from this point onwards, we could say, really, we see Mark almost rushing us towards the cross.

From this point onwards, from chapter 9 onwards, we see, really, Christ moving very quickly towards his final time. His final few months.

His final few parts of his ministry, his earthly ministry before the cross. And before he gets there, we see this day, we see this simple discussion taking place.

And as Jesus speaks plainly, I think it's very important for us to do the same today. See, the truth is, and I'll be honest, I peek behind the curtain here in the study.

[ 27 : 57 ] This was going to be two or three sermons worth from these verses. But Jesus here speaks plainly. I think it's smart for us and it's appropriate for us at this junction, before we come to an end, a break in our study and spend a month or two away from it.

But we speak plainly today together from these words. So rather than go too in depth, and there's plenty of depth we can plumb in these verses, let's just seek to look at what Jesus is saying.

Three very simple headings. We see, first of all, the question of verse 27 down to verse 30. That question which hangs in the air. That's the question we're basing everything we're saying on today.

That question of who Jesus is. But more than that, then who is he to you and to me? The question, then we see the cost of salvation.

What it costs Jesus. And then finally, the cost of following Jesus. So the question and the cost times two. The cost to Jesus and the cost of following Jesus.

[ 29 : 14 ] The question, quite simply, in verse 27 down to verse 30, we see is that they're walking and talking. And on the way he is talking to the disciples, is Jesus always talking to them?

And we said this last time, we have to remember, Jesus is with these men pretty much 24-7 for these few years. There are hundreds of conversations taking place throughout these years.

We only have what's recorded for us. What God and his plan deemed to be essential for us. And John says that. Everything Jesus did, all the miracles and all the interactions he had, we couldn't contain it all.

John, again being the poet that he was, says all the books in the world couldn't contain it. In other words, Jesus continually taught. He continually did his miracles and showed who he was.

And this is just one of many conversations we have here recorded. But this one is recorded. In this conversation, Jesus is walking and talking, and quite simply and in conversational style, the grammar here, verse 27, verse 28, is very conversational.

[ 30 : 25 ] The wording is very relaxed. And Jesus walking and talking, he just asked the disciples, who do folks say that I am? People. But literally, who do folks, who do the, he's using very relaxed terms here, almost slang terms.

Who do the folks, people, say that I am? Who do people say that I am? Who do the people you interact with and you talk to and you see daily, who do they say that I am?

We see that the disciples, they offer them three different answers of what they've heard people are saying about Jesus. Some say you're John the Baptist, presumably John the Baptist, as I were, back from the dead.

Some say you're Elijah, the prophet, again, back from the dead. And others say one of the prophets. Now, we think, well, surely we didn't actually think he was a prophet back from the dead, or he was Elijah, or somehow John the Baptist back from the dead.

And, well, the people on this day, they weren't foolish. They knew people didn't rise again. At the same time, they did have a strong belief, and we see that when Christ is on the cross, and we'll see this, God willing, next year.

[ 31 : 41 ] They do believe that somehow he's calling for Elijah, and they claim to be Elijah, and that's a whole different sermon. But safe to say, in summary of these three answers, there is a mix of opinions as to who Jesus was.

And supposing the people didn't believe he was actually the prophet back from the dead, Elijah, John the Baptist, or one of the prophets, in spirit, they would say that he is like John the Baptist, he is like Elijah, he's like one of the prophets.

Well, in one sense, they're not wrong. But note what is missing. There is no clarity.

There is no clear answer. There is no certain answer about who Jesus is. Jesus has been quite clear and quite plain, as he has walked and taught and done his miracles about who he is.

Again and again, we see who he is. Now, again, he's been quite subtle at times, and he's not proclaimed himself publicly. But at the same time, we saw the miracles, we saw the healings.

[ 32 : 51 ] As he is doing these wonderful things, these glorious miracles, he is proclaiming who he is. But there's confusion. There's great confusion. I wonder if you'd to go door to door, even this afternoon around Tolstah just now, and asked from one end of the Calgary, let's go to the Glen, from the Glen to that side of things, all around the loops.

And he went door to door, you ask people, who do you think Jesus is? Who is he? Who was he? The variety of answers, I'm sure, would be many.

Some would say, I'm sure, well, he never existed. When Jesus says, who do people say that I am? Some in our village, and perhaps some here, I don't know.

I don't know your heart. You might say, well, Jesus, you never existed. Jesus, there's no evidence you existed. You're just a story that's been made up over the years to make people feel something, to make people feel happy, to make people feel okay about the scary world.

As Dawkins would always say, that Jesus is just a crutch for those hobbling through a life that has no meaning and has no purpose. We live in a cold, dead, uncaring, evolving world.

[ 34 : 17 ] Deal with it. Jesus never existed. Some might say, well, Jesus, you were a good man. I believe that later people added all these stories onto you, but really, you're a good man.

You try to help people. You try to lift people up from abuse and from the evil of the day. Well, in one sense, they weren't wrong.

They wouldn't be wrong. Jesus was very much a good man. He was a perfect man. But they won't say he was any more than that. Because I would say, Jesus, you're a good teacher.

I like the things you talked about mostly. I like the beatitudes. I like all the teaching about being kind to people, being nice to people. I like all the teachings you had.

These are good teachings. You taught good things. Whilst conveniently ignoring what he talked about turning to him to be saved.

[ 35 : 18 ] And him only. Some might even say, our Muslim friends would say, Jesus was real. And he did miracles. And he was a good man.

And he was a prophet sent from God himself. Again, prophet, priest and king.

Yes, he was. But he was more than that. More than just a prophet. He is the final word of God. For all the many answers we could give, and the many answers people do give about who Jesus is, they are all lacking.

There are many who will say many things about Jesus. Many will say he didn't exist. Well, he did. However, however atheistic you want to be, it's very old-fashioned now in the atheistic communities.

I try my best to keep up with the changing views of the day. They change very quickly, but I was last looking into it a year ago now, two years ago. At that point, the atheistic community, the thinkers, the big thinkers were saying it was stupid to say that Jesus did not exist.

[ 36 : 42 ] There was a man called Jesus who existed who was certainly well-known in his day. That much is without dispute. Of course, if you dispute everything else, but that much he existed. He was real.

There was a man at least called Jesus who did something that was well-known. Some say he was a good man, but they miss out the fact he was a perfect man. Some say he was a good teacher, but they ignore half his teachings.

Where his teaching is uncomfortable, they ignore that part and listen to the bits that they like instead. Some say he was a prophet, of course, and they're not wrong. He certainly was a prophet, but he wasn't just any old prophet sent from God.

He was the final word. He's a very living word of God. If our answer does not match what Peter says, then dear friends, we are missing out.

If I was to ask yourselves today, I know you've heard this, I'm sure, this text before, and you've heard this question before, and I know it's very easy, and I assure you it's very easy, myself included, at times and sermons to switch off.

[ 37 : 52 ] But if I say that we'll be done before the hour because I want to be precise today, I want to be simple today and clear today, I ask you the question from God's word again, where Jesus asks, who do people say that I am?

Well, that's fine, that's fun, we can all think about that. But here the question becomes a lot more serious, where in verse 29, Jesus turned to these men around him, and he asked them the important question.

Now, when I ask this question just now, it's not me as your minister you have to answer to. It's not to the session you have to answer to. It's not to your community you have to answer to.



When I ask the question again from God's word in a second, it is the living God you're answering to, who can see your answer, who knows your answer, who can see past all the bluff and bluster you add to it, all the caveats you add to it.

The question is simple, and the answer must be simple too, friends. Where Jesus asks, but who do you say that I am?

[ 39 : 11 ] It's quite scary, isn't it? Because there's no escape from this question. At this moment, I'm sure you're, perhaps, you're trying to avoid the question.

You're thinking of other things, you're thinking, if I keep thinking of other things, I can get through this next 20 minutes in just 50 minutes, whatever it is, and just escape. But you won't.

Because you've heard the gospel again, the question is, from Jesus, to you right now, dear friends, who do you say that I am? And the truth is, it's a question from the one who made you and who knows you.

It's a question that demands an answer from you. It's a friendly question, it's a warm question, but it still demands an answer. Friends, who is Jesus to you?

Do you just think about him on a Sunday when you come to church? Do you actually believe what you hear in his word? Do you actually believe what you read or is read to you each week?

[ 40 : 21 ] And the question is, do you ever plan, truly plan, on actually acting on what you've been hearing week after week, year after year, decade after decade, friends?

And again, I said before, I'm almost a year in now, nine months in, but a new minister doesn't come with a new gospel. And supposing I spend my whole ministry here if the Lord wills it and I move on or I pass away at the end of my time here and a new minister comes, God willing, he won't bring a new gospel.

Styles change, ways of doing things change, our gospel is the same. RJ and myself have the same gospel. From 1948 onwards, we have the same gospel, preached in this place in various ways and the same question is hung in the air every week from that day to this day as long as the Lord gives us, who do you say that Jesus is?

Who is he to you? Who do you think that he is? Do you care about him? Do you actually spend time wondering if he is real and if all this is true, then what does that mean for me?

Friends, who do you say that Jesus is? I can't, I can't preach you into the kingdom.

[ 41 : 44 ] Again, if I could, I would. I would do my level best. I would camp out here a week after a week and do nothing but sermon you until the cows came home. But I can't preach you into the kingdom. I can't ask this question enough for you to come into the kingdom.

What I can do is ask this question one more time and implore you. And I said this before, I don't, I have no shame in saying it.

Friends, I love you. I've been called here to love you, to serve you, do whatever I can to be available to you as your minister.

And because I have been called to care for you and to show love towards you, I will love you just now once more by asking you the question one more time from the words of Jesus who knows you and who made you and who knows the answer you have in your mind, who do you say that I am?

Okay, it's not to me you have to give an answer. It's not to a session, not to a press period, not to a POV committee. It's Jesus himself who we all must wait one day to answer that question to.

[ 42 : 58 ] We either answer it now in time or we answer it in eternity. what's the response that Jesus gets from Peter?

Peter answers him, you are the Christ, you are the anointed one, you are the Messiah, the Mashiach, you are the one promised by God.

You're the one God promised from all time to come and to save his people. You're the one sent from God. You're the one sent to bring salvation to his people.

The one for whom there is no salvation outside of the Messiah. You're the one sent to love your people. If today were I asked the question from God's word, who do you say that Jesus is?

If your answer is not the answer of Peter, then dear friend, and there is no joy in saying this, but it's said in genuine love, there is no hope.

[ 44 : 10 ] In of yourself there is no hope. Unless you can say today that Jesus is the Messiah. He is your Messiah. He is the one come to save you, come to serve those who are needing that love, come to be a servant king.

If you can't say that he has come to save you from your sins and redeem you and rescue you, if you can't understand that, if you can't articulate that for yourself personally, it all means nothing.

Yes, you understand it. Yes, you know it all. There's many here and you don't know Jesus, but you know your Bibles far better perhaps than I do. I'm sure you do.

You can recite chunks of it more than I ever will. Your confession, your catechisms, you're fully kitted out in terms of your knowledge of scripture, but you cannot say as of yet the words of Peter that Jesus is the Christ.

He is the one sent to save you. Until you can say that, I mean it. Until you can say for yourself that you know you're a sinner who needs saving, that he has come to save sinners, he's come to save you.

[ 45 : 25 ] And dear friends, there's nothing else to be said about him. As Jesus gets the answer from Peter that he is the saviour, we see when Jesus teaches them, for him to be the Messiah, to be the saviour, it is a costly thing.

There is no cheap grace. Salvation is free, dear friends, please don't mishear me. Salvation is free for those who wish to be saved, for those who cry out for salvation.

It is a free gift, totally free, no catches, no tricks. Those who come and ask for it, God offers salvation freely to all and any who come to him.

It's free for us, but it's costly to Jesus. What is the cost of salvation to Jesus?

Verses 31 down to verse 33. He began to teach them, saying the Son of Man must suffer many things, and so on down to verse 33. Just to summarise what it cost to our saviour, he left glory.

[ 46 : 38 ] He became, as it were, the Son of Man. Again, this is not new teaching, we've heard this countless times, but just to put back in our minds, just for a short second just now. Imagine, and you can't imagine, but we can do our best to conceive of the idea.

Glory. Unmeasured, eternal glory. Father, Son, and Spirit, one God, three persons, eternal perfection, eternal unity, eternal love and glory, and everything else, all the attributes of God, and full perfection, full beauty.

glory. And from that indescribable glory, the eternal second person of the Godhead, all the power and beauty and glory of God, he takes on flesh and bones.

He is born as one of his own creatures. He is, at least physically, he is limited to a body made from the dust, made from atoms, made from the thing he himself created.

He humbled himself down to be born. Born to a normal, poor family and the back end of nowhere.

[ 48 : 07 ] He became human. He suffered a life of rejection, a life of pain, a life of ongoing misery. That is the cost of the salvation for his people.

Born, the incarnation, he became human, like us in all ways, apart from sin, but we know that, but like us in all ways.

All the hunger and thirst that we have, all the agonies and grieving and tears and pain and sadness and burdens and days of darkness and days of heaviness, he was like us in all ways.

He was rejected by friends, rejected by family. He spent a lifetime seeing the destruction and the evil of the sin in the world that he himself had created and sustains, rejected by his own people, rejected by his own creations, tortured in that horrifying way, thorns that size jammed into his skull, his back lashed beyond belief with shards of metal and shards of bone, his whole figure disfigured.

heart, and when nails put through and our saviour, the one who created all things, who sustains all things, he slowly suffocated to death, choking to death on his own fluids in his lungs, all whilst there to bear in his very soul the full wrath of all the sins of all his people, not just the physical pain which is beyond our understanding, but the very real spiritual pain as Christ endures the wrath of God for his people, as he became what?

[ 50 : 17 ] as he became sin on that cross, the one who knew no sin, he became the very physical reality of sin, as God the Father poured out his wrath on the Son.

Salvation comes with an immeasurable cost to our saviour, who at this point and at this moment, who still bears in his body the marks of his love for his people, who was raised again, yes, but forever will be man, fully man and fully God, who will ever be there, again, quoting Rabbi Duncan, I've done it a thousand times, but I keep doing it, the reminder that the dust of the earth now sits enthroned in heaven, forever man, forever God, yes, but forever man, forever retaining that humanity and of his love for his people, that's the cost of his salvation for all who come to him, and every time we hear again the gospel message, every time we ignore again the gospel message, you're ignoring that great cost, that great love that was poured out and shown to you, you think, well that doesn't make sense, it's not right, why would he suffer for me, that surely isn't that truth, and surely the gospel isn't just believe and be saved, if you're having these doubts, then dear friends, look what happens with

Peter, when Jesus tells them what must take place, Peter begins to rebuke Jesus, and poor Peter, he's trying his best, we could say in one sense, he can't understand, Jesus, you can't suffer for us, you can't do that, it doesn't make any sense, surely there must be more to salvation, surely that's not how we're saved, what does Jesus say, he rebukes Peter, and he says to Peter, get behind me Satan, as Peter tries to say, that can't be how it's done, surely I must bring something for my salvation, surely the salvation can't come at the cost of a suffering saviour, Jesus says, that is the devil's words, Peter, if you're saying, surely there must be a trick to it, surely the gospel message can't be that simple, surely Jesus taking my sin and my suffering and my wrath for me can't be that simple, there must be more, it can't be that easy to be saved, dear friends, that is the devil himself who is saying that to you, the gospel is that simple, the gospel is that easy, he has come to save his people, it's as simple as that, he has paid the price, all we must do is come to him and he does, as it were, the rest, for those of us who do follow

Jesus, who do love him, who do serve him, we know there is a cost with that, we'll end with this, there is a cost with following Jesus, it is free to follow him, there is no good enough life, there is no payment, there is a cost to following him, the gospel has not come and believe in Jesus and have a free and easy life, that has never been the gospel call, where it is the gospel call, you're being lied to, the gospel call is come follow Jesus and it's free to be saved, but a life following Jesus, it is a costly life, it is a costly life, verse 34 down to verse 38, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me, if you're to follow Jesus, it's free, but it hurts, why does it hurt?

Because you must give up your self-righteousness, you must say to yourself and be willing to say to yourself and to say to the world around you, I can't save myself, I can't do it, you must deny yourself, you must say, well, I can't do it, I have no power, but he alone has the power to save me and to keep me and to love me, that costs and that hurts, give up your self-righteousness, give up your determination to save yourself, also give up your place of comfort, spend your whole life finding your comfort in yourself, instead find it in Jesus, pick up your cross and follow him, the reality is following Jesus, it will cost you your life, it will cost you your life, but if you do not follow him, the life you are leading will end in eternal death anyway, that is a solemn reality, it is costly to follow Jesus, it means you must be born again, you must live a new life, not in your power, not in your strength, in his power, and his strength, can I just say, be very honest brothers and sisters and friends, for any here today, and you're saying, well,

[ 56 : 10 ] I think I do love Jesus, I think I do actually believe the whole gospel, but I worry that if I publicly confess that, I'm not even talking about going forward, I'm talking about just being honest and admitting that you love Jesus, that you know him, that he's your saviour, if you're saying, well, if I admit that, if I confess that, if I say I know him and love him, then what if I make a mess of things, what if I make an embarrassment of myself, what if I live a life that doesn't match up to that great calling of being a Christian, what if I'm a hypocrite, what if I'm X, Y, or Z, whatever excuse you have, dear friends, you are in good company, you have a minister who at times is a hypocrite, you have a session and brothers and sisters here who at times are hypocrites, who at times lie, who at times sin, at times get things so terribly wrong, because we're sinners saved by grace, the call is not a call of internal perfection and our own actions, no, it's a call to follow

Jesus, take up our cross and follow him, he keeps us, he sustains us, and for every wrong turning we do, he keeps us going, the horrifying truth, and Jesus here is honest, verse 36, if you keep living your life friends, without Jesus, verse 36 reminds us all the reality of it, for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul, for what can a man give in return for his soul, a life spent doing any and everything apart from getting to know Jesus as saviour, you might be successful, you might be happy, you might be accomplished in everything you've done, a happy family, a good family, a good life, and so on, and so on, and so on, it all means nothing here, according to Jesus, to gain the whole world, supposing you were to gain the whole world, suppose you were to get everything you wanted and do everything you wanted and be the person you wanted to be, tick off all the boxes of what you want to achieve and do in life and die a happy man or a happy woman slowly and peacefully in your sleep, content of your family surrounding you, it all means nothing, it all means nothing if you haven't come to know Jesus.

As we stand here today and as we gather here today, these are hard things to hear, if it's not the first time you've heard them, you've heard them countless times before, but dear friends, please hear them once more.

As the question resounds in the air, and I'll end with the question, the question resounds in the air, let's read the verses one more time. Jesus says, who do people say that I am?

And they told him, John the Baptist, ours say Elijah, and ours one of the prophets. And he asked them, but who do you say that I am?

[ 59 : 51 ] And Peter answered him, you are the Christ. brothers and sisters, our prayer, and my prayer, and the congregation there, our prayer as a congregation is that you would answer this question the same way that this week, that this evening, that next week, if I was to ask you, who do you say Jesus is?

You could say, honestly, he is my saviour, he is the Messiah, he is the one sent from God to save sinners, to save me, to love me, to keep me, who gave his life for me.

And that can be you, you can say that, if only you would come to him. Let's put our heads in a word of prayer. Lord, we leave these things with you, as we have examined once more the glorious truth of the saviour who has come to save sinners.

We ask, Lord, that you would impress these truths into our minds. We pray just now for your people here today, Lord, for those of us who know and who love Jesus already, as we remind us of the simplicity of the gospel.

Forgive us for at times overcomplicating the gospel. Forgive us for at times adding caveats and adding loopholes and making things far more complicated than our saviour ever did.

[ 61 : 21 ] Lord, we ask forgiveness for that. Help us to be clear communicators of the gospel. We pray once more for our dear friends, those we love and those we care for so deeply here today.

We ask that as we have heard once more of the gospel message, that you would make it through to them. Lord, we would see and understand that Jesus is a saviour to them, that he has paid that price for them, that all we need to do is come.

Take and eat and taste that God is good. We trust in him. Our blessing will be the ears today. Help us to come to sing our final item of praise. We give you thanks as always for those who are so willing to lead in the sung worship.

We understand it's not just something we do to bookend our sermons. No, Lord, our sung worship is a vital, essential part of our worship as we join together in our song of praise to you.

Lord, receive our worship, we ask. Ask all these things in and through and for Christ. It's precious name, say. Amen. Before we turn to our psalm, I asked last week, I gave you some homework last week.

[ 62 : 36 ] Well, if you haven't done your homework, you've still got time. Before this evening, I do encourage you, please do consider coming out to the evening services. If it's not your pattern, please do.

It's usually an hour. I'm usually a bit more efficient in evenings than I am afternoons. It's usually an hour of your time. And we're coming to a conclusion in our series and the judges. So I ask if you could please read chapters 19, 20, and 21 for this evening.

These three chapters go together, and it's a hundred and something odd verses if we read them. So please this evening, if you are coming along, I do pray you would come along, please read these chapters before this evening to help us to come to the conclusion of our series of the judges.

We're here to finish our service. Let's sing in conclusion from the Psalter, Psalm 110. Sorry, Sing Psalms, do apologize. Sing Psalms, Psalm 110.

That's on page 149. Sing Psalms, Psalm 110, on page 149. We can sing verses 1 down to verse 6 of the Psalm.

[ 63 : 46 ] Of course, the Psalm, again, it's messianic. We've covered it before, looking at the reality that in Jesus we have a king who loves his people, but a king who also will one day come and take his people home to be with himself, conquering his enemies.

The Lord said to my Lord, sit here at my right hand until I make your foes a stool on which your feet may stand. the Lord will make your reign extend from Zion's hill.

With royal power you'll rule among those who oppose your will. Psalm 110, verses 1-6. God's praise. The Lord said to my Lord, set still at my right hand until I make your foes house to on old dead everybody has in asm s love will fail

Per O God, I close you all, close you well.

When you display your power, your people walk to you.

[ 65 : 46 ] At all, our heaven holy is your good word, God like you.

The church of me, the Lord, with solemn thy post-porn.

Just thy medicine, the new God of peace forevermore.

The Lord's hand is right now. There it will never stay, put on yesterday.

. The mighty of the earth In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit both you now and forevermore.

[ 68 : 07 ] Amen.