

# It's All About Jesus

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[ 0 : 00 ] Oh, hey kids. That was Carenza. She's got a bit of a funny accent, hasn't she? That's a funny accent. You're right up the front there.

So I'm from New Zealand. So our accent is very, very different. Do you know what the word sophisticated means? That's the difference.

Now, this morning, guys, what I want to talk about is who do we belong to? Who do we belong to? It's a bit of a weird sentence, isn't it?

Who do we belong to? But all of us actually belong to somebody. Oh, what do you think? We belong to God? Oh, there goes my sermon. Okay, let's flick a couple of pages.

Well, let's just go through it anyway, shall we? Now, Romans 12 says that as church members, we belong to each other. But that's just one type of belonging relationship. What I want to do is I want to bring up a few people and give you some examples of other types of belonging relationship.

[ 1 : 06 ] So first up, Trip, Rachel, and their special friend. Here they come. Can you see them?

They're coming. They're just over here. Here they come. There we go. Why don't you stand right in the middle there?

Okay, so this is Trip. It's a funny name, isn't it? Trip. Actually, Trip, why don't you tell us, what's your strategy with that name, actually? Just for the...

It's actually a nickname. My name's Gene Prince III, so it's like the third, triple. So that's the strategy behind that one. Isn't that interesting? Isn't that interesting, kids?

Okay, and Rachel? Rachel, that's a normal name. That's good. And who is this here? Who's your special little friend here? Lily and Gene.

Lily and Gene. Can you all see Lily and kids? Awesome, eh? Awesome. Do you remember when you were that young? It was a lot simpler back then, wasn't it? A lot simpler.

[ 2 : 21 ] Okay, Rachel and Trip, I've got a couple of quick questions for you here. Tell me, what's it like being a parent? Well, in our extensive experience, I'd say at this point it's pretty all-consuming.

Is it? Yeah, to say the least. Good, good. It's good fun. Good, good fun. Good fun. That's good. And how has it changed your life? Has anything changed? Nah. No? Easy.

I think the thing that we've realized is it's a permanent change, you know? Like, we realize we're kind of in this forever. Like, there's no getting out of it, you know? So, uh...

Not that your parents want to get out of it, kids. Nope. So, we are now forever united with Lillian and her with us. And that's good. That's a good thing.

Yeah. Now, what does it mean to belong to each other as a family? Yeah. I think one thing is now we kind of, we care for each other. We look out for each other. And so, what's good for Lillian, we're now, you know, looking for that, hoping to see that in her life.

[ 3 : 29 ] And as she grows up, she will, you know, care for us and we will love each other. Okay, so belonging to each other, this is a good thing most of the time. This is a good thing. This is a great thing.

Okay, thank you, guys. Okay, thank you. Okay, I want to welcome up somebody else now. Is there an Amy in the building? Here's an Amy. Here's an Amy. Here she is coming up, kids.

Look at her. She looks nice, doesn't she? She looks nice. Now, Amy, it's Amy, is it? Amy. What is this?

Kids, can you see, what is that? You might have to look quite closely. What is that? What is that? What is it? A wedding ring. It's a wedding ring. And what is that stone in the middle there?

It's not a cubits, a conian, as people think. That is, that's a diamond. And it's actually quite hard to make them that small, all right? Just so you know.

[ 4 : 26 ] Okay, so this means that Amy is married, all right? Amy's married. Now, can anyone guess who Amy is married to? Anybody? Anybody? Apart from somebody who might know.

Anybody? Anyone? Anyone? I'll give you a clue. He's wearing a cassock. How are you on your ecclesial vestments up here?

Yes? Yes! Yes! That is right. Now, here is a good life lesson for you. When you have an accent, you can marry somebody far prettier than you actually deserve, all right?

Now, Amy, I have a couple of questions for Amy, and these are going to be very important questions. Amy, you're very happy, aren't you?

That's more, that was actually, you don't have to, that's more of a rhetorical question. Why don't you come over here and speak loudly into the microphone. Okay, what is the best thing about being married?

[ 5 : 26 ] This is the family service. What is the best thing about being married? This is a check. Silly girl.

The best thing is that I get to hang out and be with someone that I really, really like and enjoy lots of the time. And in what, ooh, I got a ooh up the front there.

That is good, isn't it? And what does it mean for us to belong to each other? Belong, belong. Belong is a little bit of a weird word, because when I think about belongings, I think about possessions.

Like, this belongs to me. But it actually kind of works, because we have a commitment to each other, therefore we belong to each other. So, sometimes that commitment, you want it, and sometimes you don't.

But it's there, it's there. But because you're committed, you belong to each other. Great. Well, thank you, Amy. Thank you. You look very nice this morning. That went far better than I thought, actually, to be honest.

[ 6 : 29 ] So, we have looked at a couple of different ways that we belong to each other. Like, a child belongs to their parents, and a husband and a wife, and belong to each other. But there is a much bigger belonging.

Those things are good things, but they point to something else. They show us how to think about another thing. Let me read out a Bible verse for you, okay, from the little section of the Bible we're looking at.

This is from Colossians 1, 15 to 16. He is the image of the invisible God. That's talking about Jesus. The firstborn over all creation. For by Him, Jesus, all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

All things were created by Christ and for Christ. Let me tell you what this means very quickly. That means God created everything. God created everything.

That means, and He created everything for Jesus. That means the whole world belongs to Jesus.

That means everything belongs to Jesus. That means we belong to Jesus.

[ 7 : 34 ] That means you belong to Jesus. And that's very good news. And we belong to Jesus, and He wants us to enjoy Him and follow Him forever.

Now, I want to bring up one more person to interview. Shannon Daly. Hello, Shannon.

This is Shannon Daly, everybody. Shannon, I have one question. I want to put it over here to the microphone. I have one question to ask you. It's a very simple question.

What does it mean to you to belong to Jesus? Well, I was thinking about the verse that you told me you were going to talk about. And I think the thing that struck me was that Jesus has control over everything.

And whether that's physical world, me as a physical person, rulers, the country that we live in, everything. And that's where I get my identity.

[ 8 : 36 ] So belonging to Jesus means that I'm a child of God. And that's who I am. And that's how I know who I am. That's great. Thank you so much. Isn't that wonderful?

Isn't that great? Okay, kids. I'm going to pray for you. And then you can go back down. Okay? Let's stay here. Let's close our eyes and let's pray to Jesus. Dear Jesus, I thank you that we belong to you.

And that we can trust you because you love us so deeply. I thank you that we can also enjoy you.

Thank you we are safe with you because you are completely committed to us.

We thank you for this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Up the front. That's good. Okay, team. You're going to find your way back to your chairs there.

Let me just add 90 seconds. Let me just add 90 seconds of ideas to this passage here, okay? At the beginning, I wheeled out a couple of examples of belonging. So we had a family and a new family and a newish kind of marriage.

[ 9 : 51 ] And I brought those out as examples for us to help us think about belonging because those are the examples that the Bible uses when it wants to put some meat on the idea of what does it mean to belong to God?

What does it mean to be in a relationship with God? But, and there's some good, people use some good words, which are words which are helpful for us to remember, you know, enjoyment and commitment. These are good things for us to remember when we're thinking about a relationship with God.

But these examples are limited, obviously. And they're limited in a significant way. And because some of us won't have children and some of us won't get married. And for some of us, that's going to be circumstance or a choice.

And the problem with when we sort of think about that is we might put that on Jesus and we sort of go, okay, well, you know, having Jesus in our life, it's just like another lifestyle choice.

It's kind of a good thing, but it's just a lifestyle choice. It's a bonus. It's good to have a bit of religion in our life. When I sort of taught some high school students back in New Zealand, the curriculum, the New Zealand curriculum said that we are mental, physical and social and spiritual beings.

[ 11 : 01 ] And spirituality was just one little section and we sort of, it's good to get that sorted out, but it's just one section of our life. But can I just humbly suggest to you that the passage before us today suggests that Christ can never be just a bonus to your life, a lifestyle choice, an added extra?

No. Colossians 15, 16. Colossians 1, 15 to 16. All things were created by Him and for Him. The whole point of your life, at the guts of it, is to be for Christ.

You were created by Him to be for Him. Let's look at this at a slightly different way. There's two surprises in this passage.

The first surprise, I think, is that Jesus was there at creation. Often we think, oh, Jesus, He's great. He's a great teacher and He died on the cross and that's cool. But Christ was actually there at creation when God made the animals and the light and all that.

Jesus was there. Christ was not an afterthought. He wasn't like God thought, oh my goodness, you know, sin has entered the world. I better do something about this. I better, you know, beget a son and sacrifice him instead of tidy everything up.

[ 12 : 13 ] No, Christ was there from the start. And the second surprise, and more relevant to what we're talking about this morning, and I'll finish with this, was that everything was made for Christ to be king over. It wasn't like the Father created all this great stuff and Jesus was just hanging about and God's like, hey, you know, if you're good, I'll let you play with it.

You can sort of enjoy it a little bit. No, to borrow from the name of the series, it's all about Jesus as all our lives should be.

Amen. Amen. Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, all things were made through you and all things were made for you, and that means we belong to you.

Everything that we have is yours, and what we give here is a token of that truth. We ask that we may give it with hearts full of gratitude and that it may be a sign that everything in our lives, our heart, our mind, our actions, our relationships, all things belong to you and are submitted to you for your glory.

[ 13 : 36 ] Amen. Friends, please be seated as we continue in prayer. Let us pray.

Dear God, despite our challenging life situations, thank you that we can always pray to you and know that you will hear us.

There is no situation or physical place from which we cannot have access to your presence and be able to pray to you, and we can only do that because of Jesus. The prodigal son made up his mind to return to his father.

Father, he left his life of sin and walked home knowing that his father would hear his cry and take him back with open arms. May we be like Job, who despite suffering so much, never doubted your presence in his life.

We learn in the scriptures of your people who seek refuge from their trying situations. So it is to you, O God, that we call upon to hear our prayer this morning.

[14:48] Thank you that we belong to you. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Thank you for your church worldwide and for your body represented here at St. John's.

Thank you for those who shepherd us and teach us in your name, for David Short, Dan Gifford, and Jim Saladin. Thank you for the church staff, trustees, and church committee, and all the men, women, youth, and children who are committed to serving you in this place.

We pray for your protection for our leaders, wisdom for those who make decisions, and joy for those who contribute their time and talents in making St. John's a faith-filled community where we learn to follow you.

In your mercy, Lord. Hear our prayer. Father, we thank you for your holy word and for the priority it has in this place. We pray for all those who clearly and rigorously study and teach your word to us and to others.

Enlighten them and teach them so that we in turn may see you more clearly and understand more fully all that you have accomplished for us in Jesus Christ. In your mercy, O Lord.

[16:00] Hear our prayer. Dear Jesus, we pray for the children and the youth of our church.

Help us to understand what it means to follow you. Help us to choose your way even when it is not easy.

Thank you for our Sunday school, for youth group, and for all the teachers and leaders. Thank you for summer holidays and for the extra time we can spend with our families.

In your mercy, Lord. Hear our prayer. We pray for the Anglican Church in our diocese and for all its leaders and members. We pray for the church that their plans may be thwarted.

We pray for the judge overseeing the court case. We pray for Mr. Justice Kelleher as he reviews the evidence and evaluates the issues regarding the trust of this property.

[17:04] We pray for a fair judgment and for your will to be done. While we wait, we watch and wait in your name. And regardless of the outcome, may we praise your name because you are faithful, just, and kind.

In your mercy, Lord. Amen. Lord, we pray for those among us who live with chronic pain or chronic illness and who grapple with the toll it takes on their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Only you, through Jesus, can redeem the devastation that sickness and disease causes. Shine your healing light into their darkness and peace in their turmoil and reveal yourselves to these suffering ones.

You are a strong tower. May they put their trust in you moment by moment and day by day. Oh God, we pray for those among us who are sick or dying. We pray for Ron, for Ben, for Harold, Rowena, and now for anybody who you may know who is sick and suffering.

Grant to these your servants grace to desire only thy most holy will, that whether living or dying, they may be yours for your sake and for your glory. In your mercy, Lord.

[18:25] Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed, kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all the people the true love of peace and guide with thy pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth, that in tranquility thy kingdom may go forward, that people of all ages and nations may come to know Jesus till the earth is filled with the knowledge of thy love through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. And now a prayer from St. Ignatius Loyola.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve these out as nervous, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to keep the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to act for any reward, save that as knowing to do thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. Amen.