

# Who Are We O LORD

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[ 0 : 00 ] Our God and Father, will you in your infinite grace stoop to our hearts that you may speak a word to each of us.

We may with all our hearts and all our mind and all our will and all our strength hear and obey that word. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Amen. I suspect that some of you are still having trouble singing the Lord's Prayer with actions.

I want you to know that it pleased my granddaughter very much to have done it last week. It also pleased a bunch of very elderly ladies in a nursing home who are long past the time when they can speak or even hear, but where they could still move their arms to pray in that way.

It was a lovely thing to see. So it's just two people in between those ages that are having problems. Three weeks ago this morning we were sort of full of the news of that terrible air disaster.

[ 1 : 31 ] And last week we had all the news of Wimbledon to think and talk about. This week the province this morning talks about a gig for the galaxy.

I'd love to talk about that gig for the galaxy. But the eternal reality of the purposes of God, who in Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Those news items may act as a kind of shot of adrenaline to our lethargic spirits that are looking for some new thing to entertain us.

But the throb of our heart is the word of God delivered to us in Jesus Christ. And I want you to hear in the scriptures this throbbing purpose of God that sustains our life.

And we need to be quiet to hear it because it doesn't take headlines. People like you and me who are very important might overlook it altogether.

[ 2 : 51 ] So I want you to turn with me to that passage which was read as the Old Testament lesson. Page 275.

The second book of Samuel. The seventh chapter and the 18th verse. And there you have a lovely picture. The Ark of the Covenant.

Which had been brought back to Jerusalem. And had been put in a tent. And there, you know, the tablets from Moses and the rod of Moses.

And these things which were housed in the Ark of the Covenant. And the Ark marked the presence of God among his people in that place.

And the story begins this morning in verse 18. Moses went into the tent and sat down to talk to God.

[ 3 : 48 ] Well, I'm sure that we can do an injustice to this. But I'm sure it would be good if you and I could sit down and talk to God.

And if you look and see in verse 18 what it was they talked about. There is one question which screams from the first verse of this section.

Which is verse 18. David said as he sat in the presence of God. He said, Who am I?

Now that's a great question. Who am I? Because we are citizens of the materialistic, technological, secular, 20th century world.

We are liable to think that when you go into church the most appropriate question is to say to God, Who are you? But somehow I think David had it right.

[ 4 : 56 ] That the real mystery in our lives is who we are. And the problem is to try and come to know who you are.

Well, that's the concern that David has. To stand before, to sit before God and say, Who am I?

Who is my house, my family? Who is my nation? Who am I? David had been wonderfully blessed by God.

And he was aware of having been wonderfully blessed. And this was a thanksgiving prayer. Sometimes the same question can be evoked in us by very different circumstances.

Tragedy may befall you. And you come and sit before God and say, Who am I? Old age may creep up and bend your back and thin your bones.

[ 6 : 08 ] And your heart beats irregularly. And you say, Lord, who am I? Disease may take hold of you. And you ask the question, Who am I?

Unemployment may overtake you. And you have to ask the question, Who am I? Let me remind you, It's a profoundly important thing to do.

And one of the things that our society does to us is to keep us from asking that question. It keeps filling us with news and events.

And we never get around to asking that question. Don't leave it till your funeral. When somebody will stand up and say, I want to remember our old and dear and departed friend.

Because by and large, And I say this with all due respect, I don't think they know what they're talking about When they try and say that about somebody else.

[ 7 : 12 ] I don't even think you could put it on a tape to be played at your own funeral To describe who you were. It remains a fairly insoluble mystery.

How you break through that question. Who am I? Very difficult indeed. You're not your wealth.

You're not your home. Your wealth can disappear. Your home can be taken away. You're not what you appear to men by reason of your fashionable clothing.

Because you can be stripped of that. You're not the power you wield. Because that can be taken from you. You keep having to ask the question, Who am I?

Well, look at verse 19 and you'll begin to see the wonderful answer. In a way, it's a most inappropriate question. Because the Bible doesn't ever answer it.

[ 8 : 10 ] Directly. In the way that we might like to answer it. In the way we anticipate it should be answered. But look at verse 19. Where it says, Yet this was a small thing in thy eyes, O Lord God.

Thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. It's a very small thing for the Lord to answer who you are. It's not really that important who you are.

It's almost a negligible fact of history, who you are. Your personal concern with the answer may be very vague. But in the overall of God's purpose, it's not really a big question at all.

And David was only asking the question because he had come from being a shepherd on the hills of Bethlehem to being the king of a great nation.

He had come from being a shepherd on the hill of Bethlehem to being the king of a great nation. He had come from being the king of a great nation. He had come from being the king of a great nation. He had come from being the king of a great nation. And he couldn't understand how that had happened to him. And so he said, Who am I? I who am so small and insignificant in terms of the purpose of God.

[ 9 : 25 ] But then he says at the end of that verse 19, and I love this and hope you get hold of it. He said, Thou knowest the Lord.

It's the Lord who knows who we are. It's in verse 20. Thou knowest thy servant, O Lord God. And that is absolutely the rock bottom reality for us in the strange experience of human existence.

It's to come to the awareness that though we can't answer the question, Who am I? We can't find the answer. The thing we can find in the scriptures, in the person of Jesus Christ, By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, We can come to the awareness that God knows who we are.

He knows the answer to that question. And he asks us to trust him with it. So, David says, Who am I? Who is my house?

Who is my nation? And he knows that God knows the answer to that. Look at verse 21, how it reads, Because of thy promise, and according to thine own heart, Thou hast wrought all this greatness, To make thy servant knoweth.

[ 10 : 58 ] In other words, it's God whom we want to know. And God has worked in the circumstances of our lives To come to know the reality of who he is.

That's what he wants us to know. And the big question for us is, Do we know it? Do we know who we are?

Or are we stumbling around like blind man in a burlap bag Trying to figure out what the meaning of our existence is? And never having come to the place Where you come to some answer to that.

Knowing that God knows who you are. It says, according to thy promise. According to thine own heart.

That who you are is known in the heart of God. And the closer you get to the heart of God, The more quiet assurance you have That though you don't know, You know that you are known.

[ 12 : 08 ] And that somehow this small insignificant life Is somehow infinitely important to God. And then David in verse 22 Comes to the answer to the question, Who am I?

And the answer in verse 22 says, Thou art great, O Lord. There is none like thee. There is no God besides thee.

According to all that we have heard with our ears. And that's why Christians sing, How great thou art. That's why Christians get carried away in worship.

O worship the king. King of glory. King of peace. King of peace. It's not in the contemplation of our own navel To discover the answer to the question, Who I am.

That's not how it's done. It's done by lifting up our hearts And saying who God is And worshipping him for who he is. That we become aware of the answer to the question.

[ 13 : 18 ] And not only does David become aware that God knows who he is. He also knows who his house is. And he also knows who his nation is.

And that's why I picked that little reference to Justin Alexander. And said among all you, God has this morning chosen to show his covenant of love to you all In terms of it being demonstrated in the baptism of Justin Alexander.

Who's leaving us momentarily. And the same way God has shown himself to all the nations of the world by choosing one nation.

Look, if you will, at Exodus chapter 19, verse 3. Way back towards the beginning of the Bible. Where Exodus chapter 19, verse 3.

Where Moses went up to God. And the Lord called to him out of the mountain saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, Tell the people of Israel, You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, How I bore you on eagles' wings, And brought you to myself.

[ 14 : 44 ] Now therefore, if you will obey my voice, And keep my covenant, You shall be my own possession among all peoples. For all the earth is mine.

And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, And a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. Do you see the wonder of what happens here?

God among all the nations picks one nation and says, You are my people. And God suffers a terrible humiliation by doing that.

Because, of course, he picked the wrong nation. I say that with tongue in cheek. But it's a concession, in a sense, The human pride.

Any nation he picked would have been the wrong nation. And history has been full of nations who, In their pride and pomposity, Have said, You should have picked us because we are obviously superior.

[ 15 : 48 ] And you should have picked us because we are obviously superior. And that goes on through history. People claiming to be, In a unique way, The choice of God. But God chose this nation.

And in the world of 1985, God has chosen that nation, Which knows no ethnic boundaries, No racial boundaries, No geographical boundaries, No boundary of time or space, No boundary of language.

He has chosen that nation. The only characteristic of which, Is that they confess, That Jesus Christ is Lord.

And that is the Israel of God. And those are the people, Whom God has chosen to identify with, And to be humbled by. Because so many people saying, If God has chosen them, I don't want God.

But God has chosen them, In order to demonstrate to all the world, His purpose of love. To demonstrate to you, Who you are.

[ 17 : 00 ] To answer the question, From your heart, Who am I? The answer to that question, And the conclusion to this passage, In verse 28, And now, O Lord God, Thou art God, Thy words are true, Thou hast promised this good thing to Thy servant, Now therefore may it please Thee, To bless the house of Thy servant, That it may continue forever before Thee.

For Thou, O Lord God, Hast spoken, And with Thy blessing, Shall the house of Thy servant, Be blessed forever. This is the God, Who has revealed Himself in love.

This is the God, Who has spoken to us by His word. This is the God, Who has covenanted Himself, To us in promise. And when we say, Thou art God, We are answering, The deepest question of our hearts, Who am I?

That's how we answer. It's the only way, We can answer. We cannot understand, We cannot understand, Ourselves, Apart from the God, Who has loved us, And given Himself, For us.

And that God has invited us, To put our whole trust in Him. I hate coming to this part of the sermon, Not just because it's the end, But because, I feel, The hypocrisy, Of my own heart.

[ 18 : 41 ] And when you see, The riches of the God, Who has loved us, The God, Who has made Himself, Known to us in Jesus Christ, The God, Who has revealed Himself, To us, The God, The God, Who indwells us, By His Holy Spirit, The God, Who has spoken to us, In His word.

My life seems, Such a paltry, Meaningless thing. And the only comfort, I can have, Is that this God, Has chosen, And this God, Has given me, His word, And this God, Has made His promise.

And my business, Is to offer Him, My whole heart's worship, With the whole, Of my life. There was an old, Retired, Missionary, In church last week, When we did, You know, Our Father, Who art in Him.

He said, Why are they dancing? And, He said, I don't want them doing that, If they're not doing the other thing, Which is to give themselves, A living sacrifice, Wholly acceptable unto God.

The kind of, Enacted reality of it, In church, Must be, Must be done in stone, In the private, And personal reality of it, In our daily lives.

[ 20 : 08 ] We can't afford, To let those things, Get out of touch, With one another. There's got to be, That reality. Let's pray, That we might know, That reality, As we conclude this service.

That's how, To let those things.

And if you give self light, As we continue this service. Therefore, thy servant has found courage to pray this prayer to thee.

O Lord God, thou art God. Thy words are true. Thou hast promised good to thy servant.

May it please thee in thy grace to bless us as we seek with all our hearts to serve thee. Amen.

[ 21 : 38 ] We're going to sing hymn number 532. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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

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

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

Amen. Amen.

[ 24 : 16 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let's be thou, Lord God of Israel, forever and ever.

All that is in the heaven and the earth is thine. All things come of thee and of thine own have we given to thee. Amen. To this God who knows us shall we now turn in prayer.

Amen. Amen. Amen. O Lord our God, ever faithful, utterly to be trusted.

[ 26 : 44 ] May our hearts and minds be at peace as we bring our prayers to you, Lord, in your mercy. mercy. Let us pray for our nation, government, and world. Almighty God, King of kings and Lord of lords, may your mercy and blessing rest upon our land, our Queen, those in authority under her, our Prime Minister in Parliament. Rule in the hearts of your people. Rebuke the power of unbelief. Cast down high things which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. Lead the nations in the paths of peace for the honor of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen. For the unemployed, we pray this morning. O Lord, our Heavenly Father, the

Creator of all things, support and strengthen those suffering distress through lack of work. Set them free from want and fear. Bring to them work to do and joy in doing it. We ask this in the name of the carpenter of Nazareth, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

In the silence of our hearts now this morning, let us bring before our God the victims of war. Refugees. Those caught up in famine. All those who are in prison this day. All victims of natural disasters. Remembering especially this morning, those affected by forest fires.

And let us remember in silence before God all we know personally who are suffering in any way. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. So, Lord, in your mercy, shall we pray this morning for our parish?

[ 29 : 36 ] May your blessing be on all who serve in this church and parish, in the ministry of Word and sacrament, in teaching and pastoral care, in service to all who are in need.

We remember especially this morning our students working in Montreal and in other places, summer camps. And we remember especially this morning the Stuart family in the midst of their bereavement.

Our God, advance your kingdom as we bear witness to your love in this parish. Lord, in your mercy. Shall we together turn to the final page of the prayer book?

And in closing, we'll say the thanksgiving together. O most merciful Father, we humbly thank thee for all thy gifts so freely bestowed upon us, for life and health and safety, for power to work and leisure to rest, for all that is beautiful in creation and in the lives of men.

We praise and magnify thy holy name. But above all, we thank thee for our spiritual mercies in Christ Jesus our Lord, for the means of grace and for the hope of glory.

[ 31 : 19 ] Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. And the grace. The grace. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the love of God. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with us all evermore. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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

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

Amen. Amen.

[ 32 : 15 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. the parish to Jonathan and Lorraine Bayless on the birth of their young daughter last Sunday, Julia.

Secondly, I understand that Athena Ayres is back from her sabbatical. We would all like to meet her again and to hear of her travels. Finally, you'll be interested to know that Dietrich and Joe Bartel have arrived safely in Winnipeg.

They purchased a small house in the St. James District, and they are pleased to inform you all that neither the heat nor the mosquitoes have gotten to it yet.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 33 : 30 ] um or um Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 37 : 23 ] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.