

The Cradle, the Cross and the Crown

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, good morning everybody. Good morning. Thank you, Bill, for venturing a contrast between the Archbishop of Canterbury and myself.
- I was glad to hear that you and others, I hope, with you are able to tell the difference.
- Let's pray. Holy Father, once more we turn to you, coming in the name of Christ to learn about Christ and needing the help of your Holy Spirit to give us understanding and to draw us close to him.
- Do it now, we pray, our Father, blessing our thoughts together, the things that I and others will say.
- May we leave this session with a stronger sense of the Saviour's glory and his presence with us than we had when we came in.
- [1 : 2 0] Grant it for his name's sake, we pray. Amen. Well, you saw the heading, the cradle, the cross and the crown, and that told you straight away, I'm sure, that what you are going to get this morning from me is what in the theological trade is called Christology, the doctrine of Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Those of you who were here last week will remember that I was talking about the need in our churches for what I described as all-age catechism.
- Remember? And I'm going to start with a definition of catechism, which actually comes from a book of which I'm part author.
- It's a definition that I like because it's got peckerish alliterations running right through it, although in fact it was my joint author, not myself, who produced this definition.
- Nonetheless, I think it's a great definition. It explains in a single sentence what all-age catechism is about, and it sets the perspective for what this talk is about.
- [2 : 5 8] So listen. Catechising. Catechising. Grounding and growing believers in a grasp of the gospel and its implications for doctrine, what they are to believe, devotion, how they are to pray, discipline, how they are to order their personal lives, duty, duty, duty, how they are to live in this world, serving others for the Lord's sake, and delight, for there is joy in the knowledge of Christ, and some Christians miss it.
- And part of the purpose of catechising is to make sure that the saints get it. So, you can see, I think, why I found myself saying, fairly emphatically, last week, that just as in good churches, like, I'd like to say, St. John's, we learn the importance of all-age Bible study, catechetical study, never cease to learn from the scriptures, to seek and find the Lord through the scriptures.
- So, we need to grasp the importance and the benefit of all-age catechetical study, which gives you doctrine for disciples, treats you as a disciple in the making, and seeks to take you further along that track.
- This is something complementary to Bible study. For us, all of us, it should be a case not of either or, but of both and.
- Bible study, yes, 100%. And catechetical study, once more, 100%. Well, this is the track on which I'm travelling in this presentation to you this morning.

[5 : 23] I wasn't able last Sunday to raise, not in a serious way anyway, the question of what is the syllabus for the catechising activity.

That is, the teaching, I say it again, the teaching of truth for doctrine, devotion, discipline, duty, and delight.

And here, I am able to answer the question, answer it, how shall I say it, in three stages.

Stage one, the syllabus is marked out for us already in the creeds, the Apostles and Nicene creeds, which we regularly use in our worship, and in confessions, any confessions that we are using in the church where we are.

for us, that means the 39 articles, and in more general terms, the prayer book, which shows you what the faith of the 39 articles looks like when translated into worship forms.

[6 : 47] We might add that if we've got links with any of the organizations which, in these latter days, have set out bases of faith as a frame within which they minister, well, we ought to take an equal interest in the bases of faith and ask ourselves, well, look at this, would this be a good syllabus for catechizing?

And most of the bases of faith of evangelical organizations would make a good basis for catechizing as a matter of fact. When you look at them, you see that. And it seems to me that we who support the organizations ought to take ownership of the bases of faith just as we take ownership of the 39 articles and make good use of these formulations for teaching and learning purposes.

purposes. So, that's the first stage of my answer to the syllabus question. It's all set out for us in the creeds, the confessions, and the bases of faith.

And it's for us to become aware of that and start using these formulations for learning and teaching. Second stage in my answer, it's all set out in the Bible.

Yes, of course. But the way things are set out in the Bible is, may I put it this way, landscape style.

[8 : 33] The Bible is a landscape of life and all the truth that is taught in the Bible is presented within the frame and the context of life.

Life in all its many, many aspects. And if we're going to learn doctrine from the Bible, well, in actual fact, we do need help.

We need help right at the outset, someone who will stand alongside us and say, well, now, this and this and this are the really important things and then the other things fit into the context established by this and this and this, that and that and that and that must be framed by this and this and this.

It's actually by Bible study of that kind that the creeds and the articles were crystallized out. And I expect, some of you anyway will know, in intervarsity for 40 years now, I think, there has been a discipline practiced and encouraged called inductive Bible study, which encourages you to build up your own theology from the Bible study that you're doing.

the one limitation is that it's always presented in terms of, well, now, each of us should do this, true, but the implication is each of us should do this without the help of these excellent statements we've inherited from the past, which should, in fact, act as a springboard to get us going.

[10 : 28] it's a case of, it was right to say, build up your theology from inductive analysis of the Bible as you study it, but it's a serious omission when you don't say, use the formulations that the Spirit of God has focused in past days and that we now inherit as, well, as I did, I say it again, as a springboard and a launch pad and starters to mould our minds in the proper theological shape.

But now to the third stage of my answer to the syllabus question, what is to be taught and learned in the catechetical process?

Third answer, climactic answer is this, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ as the way, the truth and the life.

Or, putting it the other way round, the syllabus is the way, the truth and the life, with and through and Christ, with Christ, as you follow him, your leader, your teacher, and the model for your living, through Christ, as you adore him, as your savior, who died for you, rose for you, lives for you, and now ministers to you, and in Christ, that is to say, as those who, by the Holy Spirit, have been given, let's call it, a life link with the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the spiritual strength and wisdom, the light, the love, all the aspects of

Christ's likeness, that the Holy Spirit induces, as we attempt to model ourselves on the savior, all of those qualities really are Christ living out his life in and through us.

[13 : 03] That's union with Christ expressed in Christ's likeness, and that's what Paul is talking about when he speaks in Galatians 5, of the fruit of the Spirit.

The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit reshapes us according to the pattern of the life of Christ. And in the book that I'm part author of, this is how we're going to present the mentor, the insisting, you see, and then spelling out that the syllabus for catechizing is Christ the way, the truth, and the life, or other way round, the way, the truth, and the life within and through Christ.

And that will, that as a syllabus, will inevitably lead us as students to the truth of the Trinity.

For the Lord Jesus in the Gospels is never alone. He is filled with the Spirit, we're told that, and he is always consciously the obedient Son of the Father.

And he says that over and over again. He is here on earth doing what the Father sent him to do. And there's a plan, we find.

[14 : 35] Okay, then the plan has got to come into our understanding. A plan which God made from eternity. It takes the following form according to the scriptures.

God made humans for fellowship. Love overspilled, you might say, in creating love, creating humans who would appreciate God's love and love him back.

Right at the beginning things went wrong, so the plan was adjusted, adjusted by being given a redemptive dimension.

Human beings are still here in order to receive and appreciate and respond to the love of God with love from our own hearts.

But to get into that, we sinners who have gone astray have to be redeemed. Our relationship with God has been broken by our sin and has to be made up, repaired, and our likeness to God, which without sin would have been the natural quality of our growing as we grew and developed in this world, that has ceased to be a reality.

[16 : 11] Also, we grow up misshapen. We grow up distorted and out of shape. We grow up egocentric when we ought instinctively to be God-centered, theocentric.

And so something has to be done to adjust and correct the egocentricity of our fallen nature.

It's got to be corrected from the center, from what the Bible calls the heart, which is the powerhouse of the person. The source from which come all our desires and all our doings.

The heart has got to be changed. Well, the heart is changed. And it's through Christ, first of all, that the relationship with God is adjusted through atonement.

And it's through Christ that the heart is renewed and our deepest instinct reshaped so that increasingly through life.

[17 : 19] We're learning to live in a God-centered way, in love to him who has so loved us. All of that comes to us through Christ, through union with Christ by the Holy Spirit, through the energy with which the Holy Spirit engenders his fruit, the fruit of Christ-likeness.

God-centered So, the plan of redemption is going on not just in the case of individuals, but for a massive number of folk who, in their new life, are linked both to Christ and to each other, and are constituted his body, as well as being constituted the kingdom of God, in terms, that is, of its subjects.

And so, God is creating for himself a people, redeemed, and in process of being restored, even now, and due to be perfected in glory beyond this life.

That's the basic shape of the Trinitarian story, which the Bible tells and which the creeds embody, and the articles also, and which really is the central frame of reference in all the teaching of the New Testament.

Detailed instruction about anything and everything in the New Testament is fitted into the frame established by the plan.

[19 : 07] Okay? And this means that having grasped the fact that the plan is the center of everything that's going on, quite literally, in this world, the whole of history, and every act of divine providence, of whatever sort, all of this is for the furtherance of the plan, and God is in charge at every point, carrying the plan forward.

And in the plan, the Lord Jesus is mediator in the way that I've just described, putting right both our relationship with God and our fallen, twisted nature, and this is the plan which will finally be completed, carried through, to carry through to perfection, when Christ comes again.

So, Jesus Christ is the mediator, study of the plan carries us back to Christ at every turn of the road. So, in catechizing, catechetical instruction, the person and the path and the power of Christ must ever be central, otherwise the process itself is getting out of shape, and what those in the process those being catechized are receiving, at every turn of the road, every step of the way, is wisdom for living life in the light of what the Lord Jesus Christ is in himself, and what he is to you and me.

Its response to him, its celebration of him, its fellowship with him, in which we honour him, trust him, and draw on his strength, and its doxology, in which we glorify him, look forward in hope to the day when he will come and perfect his work, and, well, things will be as if they're pictured in the book of Revelation, where there's a throne, and a lamb on it, and eternal praise being offered to the lamb, our redeemer.

Benedict, the 16th, Bishop of Rome, is already moving in the direction of publishing homilies, which, in fact, when you look at them, and indeed, he makes this obvious because he uses this word to describe them, homilies, which, when you look at them, are catecheses, that's the plural of the noun catechesis.

[22 : 26] I use it because Benedict uses it himself. And you say, what is a catechesis, according to Pope Benedict? And the answer is, it's a talk which focuses on this central area of Christian doctrine, Christian reveal, biblical reveal, truth, and elucidates it, and sorts out problems relating to it, and makes it plain and simple for the wayfaring man to understand and to live by.

What Benedict is actually doing is following up on what his predecessor, John Paul II, called for, oh, 20 years ago, when he started talking about our need of a new catechesis.

As in so many other matters, so in this, Benedict has taken his cue from what John Paul said in his, well, you may fairly call it his pioneering papacy, where he made all sorts of points, and opened all sorts of doors and windows which hadn't been opened before.

This is Benedict, as I said, following up on John Paul's insistence that in the church today we need a new catechesis.

Why? Well, because in the church today, few people have been properly, systematically, and therefore adequately instructed in these doctrinal basics.

[24 : 17] Yes, we've all got into Bible study and the Bible leads us in all sorts of interesting directions, but with Bible study there's now needed instruction in the doctrines focused pretty much the way that I've been trying to focus them in my answer to the syllabus question, which you now have before you.

Creeds, Confessions, Bible, and, as the focus, the Lord Jesus Christ as the way, the truth, and the life.

Well, now, this talk of mine is a sort of catechesis in Pope Benedict's sense. I am going to talk to you for the rest of this presentation about the Lord Jesus as incarnate, atoning, and reigning.

The cradle, the cross, and the crown. I want you to think of the Lord Jesus Christ in terms not of any of these events in isolation, but in terms of Jesus as the fulfiller of God's redemptive and restorative plan, which, as I said, is really the heart of the Bible, the revelation of the plan.

As Anglicans, we keep the church's year and make much of it, and so I think we should. Here we are in the season of Epiphany, and before that, there was Advent, preparation for Christ's coming, and then Christmas, celebrating his birth.

[26 : 16] Epiphany celebrates the fact that he came to save all mankind. Lent is coming when we prepare our hearts, really, for the joy of Easter, when we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead, having watched with him on Good Friday, as he's pictured in the Gospels dying on the cross.

Easter comes Ascension, after Ascension comes Pentecost, the outpouring of the Spirit, and the church year is rounded off, as you know, with Trinity Sunday, which celebrates the triune divine action that you see in all this sequence of events that are actually part of the plan.

The church year idea is that every year the plan be celebrated from beginning to end. Well, we tend, do we not, to separate and isolate each stage or step in the or date in the church's year, each season, that's what I ought to be saying there.

we isolate each season and focus on it exclusively so that, in fact, we rarely pick up the sense that this is all part of the plan.

Christmas is part of the plan. Easter is part of the plan. If asked, we know and we say, well, yes, of course it's part of the plan, but in our own theologizing, in our own discussion, in our own Bible study, as we explore these themes, we, as I say, we isolate these events that make up the church's year, and we don't regularly, habitually, fit them together as part of the plan, and catechesis teaches us to fit them together as part of the plan.

[28 : 37] So, I take the plan perspective, I present to you the story of Christ, from start to finish, as the heart of the plan, I present the Christian life to you as a journey, comparable in its way to the journey that Christ took from heaven through Mary's womb into the fullness of human life, and then via the cross and the resurrection back to the glory that he left.

Christ. This, in a book which was much read when I was a young Christian, it's more than 60 years ago now, in this book was focused, focused at the title, actually, this whole journey that Christ took down and then up, there and back again, if you want an echo of the Lord of the Rings, the journey was presented in the title of the book as The Son's Course, which is rather clever, you see, because if you say it, people have to check whether you mean son in the sense of S-U-N, or whether you mean son in the sense of S-O-N.

Of course, the printed title was The Son's Course, spelling son S-O-N, but the echo of the way we talk about the Son's Course from rising to setting, the echo enriched the theme, and it was a very good exposition, actually, although it was done by a Roman Catholic, very good exposition, well, you don't object to my saying things like that, friends, do you?

Roman Catholics in the 20th century have done lots of good things in expository terms, the old Reformation problems still remain, but we would be foolish if we didn't appreciate Roman Catholic exposition of nearly everything, not quite everything, but nearly everything, that makes up the faith.

And this was a good Roman Catholic book, The Son's Course, and just as I think it's helpful that we should, as a matter of habit, think of Christ in terms of the journey down, followed by the journey up, his place in other words, and achievement as at the centre of the plan.

[31 : 52] So I think it's good sense that we should think of our own lives habitually, perhaps we do, as a journey, and ourselves as travellers, pilgrims, if you want to put it that way, always on the move, at least in terms of relationships, heading for glory, sustained by faith and hope, and expressing our new life in love as we go along.

As I say this, there comes to mind a verse from a hymn which those of my generation know very well, and younger folk hardly ever sing, I find, these days.

The hymn is Abide With Me. Anyone over the age of 60 will know that hymn and probably be able to repeat it by heart the way that I can, but as I say, it's not much used nowadays.

Well, there is a verse in Abide With Me which goes like this, and it's really talking about human old age, moving along to that part of the journey which is, shall I say, penultimate.

Life in this world is mostly behind us, and we are heading for the glory before us. But this verse is I think very telling on the human course.

[33 : 36] Life as a journey, course, moving from one thing to another. Swift to its close, ebbs out life's little day. Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away.

Change and decay in all around I see. O thou who changest not, abide with me. That's not a hymn in general terms implying the worthlessness of the world.

It's a personal statement picturing our old age. Well, that, as I say, is the penultimate stage in our course. We are travellers on the road home.

just as the Lord Jesus was a traveller from the moment he appeared in this world till he was taken up and enthroned as he was on his triumphant return to the Father's side.

Okay, well now, with that perspective, let me say one two specific things now about the cradle, the cross, and the crown.

[34 : 54] The cradle, of course, points to the reality of incarnation. The word became flesh. John chapter 1 and verse 14.

Jesus Christ was the God-man, totally divine, totally human. Yes, that's a formula with which we're familiar, but how good are we at spelling it out?

A catechism teaches us how to spell it out, how to spell it out quite specifically in four points, all of which need to be grasped for clarity about what the incarnation means.

Here are the four words which point to the points. Identity, destiny, ministry, and integrity. Take them in order. Identity, who the visitor was.

God, in full strength, who has now taken to himself all that's involved in being human. In his earthly life, he is going to live within the limits of his humanness, although his divine powers would enable him to transcend those limits over and over again if that was the Father's will.

[36 : 29] And occasionally it was, but most of the time not, so that he experienced hunger and weariness and the distress of being rejected and other aspects of human experience just as we do.

It is, I think, rather important to get clear on that and not to be so delightfully mesmerized by the miracles of divine power in which the limits of our human nature were transcended, that we think of Jesus always living above the human level, so that in fact he didn't share fully in human experience after all.

I sometimes wince at hearing presentations of the Lord Jesus which so highlight his divinity as to minimize or obscure his humanity.

Oh yes, there have been plenty of lapses on the other side also, and I suppose that the people who highlight the Savior's divinity are motivated partly by the wish to keep clear of those mistakes, the mistakes made by the people we call liberals who never really got beyond, never really get beyond, seeing Jesus as a wonderful man in whom God revealed himself more directly and more fully than he ever has than any other man, and he's filled with the Spirit in a way that no other human has ever been, but the fact remains that he is a special man and that's it.

People in the Christian mainstream know better than that. they know that he is God the Son just as fully, just as directly as he was in the Father's fellowship before his incarnation.

[38 : 55] But he's living through the human body and the human nature that he has because his Father has directed him so to do.

and it's only on the occasions, the rare occasions, when the Father prompts him to do something that transcends human limits that he does it.

Well, I don't think really I ought to need to labour that point. That's something that we all of us ought to have taken in with our mother's milk.

But I guess that some of us have never had the point put to us in that way. So, I am labouring it a little bit now.

Jesus, the Son of God, who's taken to himself everything that's involved in being human, personally, physically, psychologically, in such a sense that all the elements of our human experience have become, now I give you a technical word which I'll define, archetypally his, that is inclusively his.

[40 : 15] What I mean by that is that though he died at 33, the human experience that he had enables him perfectly to understand the problems of old age men and women, as physical strength and sometimes mental strength also begin to fade, he walks with us through those experiences, even though, as I say, on earth he never should.

On earth he was a male, but for all that he perfectly understands what it means to be a female. And women, as of course everybody knows, women may be as confident in the full understanding and sympathy of Christ as he walks with them, as we men may.

That's what I mean by archetypally. I could go on like this, as far as we know he was never ill, but his human experience enables him to walk with perfect sympathy alongside us when we are ill and when we experience the various kinds of weakness of mind and heart and temperament and outlook that we sometimes do experience when we are ill and it's serious.

his human life on earth, as I said, is the basis of sympathetic help to us in all our present weaknesses in every dimension of experience.

And that needs to be said and understood clearly because it's part of the glory of Christ and the uniqueness of his human experience and we ought not to ignore it or just let it go.

[42 : 28] And then being the Son of God who's taken to himself everything involved in being human, we can say clearly his humanness was never a person, as a person he was always the Son of God, but it was a qualification of his personhood when he was on earth.

That is an aspect of what was true of him when he was on earth. And this is the difference, let us say it again clearly, between incarnation, the incarnation of the Son of God and the indwelling of the Spirit in a Christian.

When the Spirit indwells us, well, we are still human beings, human beings supernaturally touched, supernaturally empowered, but human still.

In the case of the Lord Jesus, he was Son of God all the time, he was certainly full of the Holy Spirit, but full of the Holy Spirit in terms of his basic identity as the Son, the Son of God, so that the liberal idea that the fullness of the Spirit somehow raised him above the ordinary human level, so that he becomes a special man, that doesn't tell you what is central to the reality.

The liberals at the end of the day have no way of proclaiming, indeed, they don't believe when you get right down to it, that Jesus Christ is quite simply God in the flesh, but God as truly as God is God in and through the whole order of creation.

[44 : 40] humanity and there's no diminution of his divinity any more than there's a diminution of humanity in being taken as part of his incarnate identity.

Certainly, it was sinless humanity, that is, humanity without the egocentric twist that bedevils our humanity and which we're fighting all through our lives, but that wasn't part of the human nature that he took to himself.

No, the miracle of his conception in Mary's womb included the taking of, or ensured, perhaps I'd better say, the taking of uncorrupted human nature, which again puts him in a different league from us.

Well, all these things, it seems to me, need to be said and said clearly if we're to understand the identity of our Savior.

And then, second, the second word that we need for clarity about him is the word destiny. What I've said already pretty much fills in the gaps there.

[46 : 11] We know why he came, he came to save, us, we know what he did, what his course was, achieving salvation for us, or put it the other way, qualifying himself to be our Savior when we trust him.

We know that the marvel of this whole economy of grace is that the Father sent the Son so low and that the Son was willing to go so low.

This is love without limit, you see. Jesus went so low in order to save us. What am I talking about? I'm talking about the way that, well, all that led up to the reality of the cross and then the cross itself.

Shameful death, terribly painful death, death as an outcast, death as a condemned criminal, death as a worthless person. The Romans only crucified non-Romans because they regarded the Romans as persons of worth and non-Romans as not persons of worth so they could be crucified.

Rejection of Jesus as significant is expressed by the cross as a human event from whatever angle you look at it.

[47 : 42] Yes, but we know that at the heart of all of that was atonement, the Lord laying on him the iniquity of us all, God making him the penal substitute who dies in our place bearing the retribution that divine justice, divine justice imposed and required from us transgressors.

So Paul can say, as he does say in Galatians 3 13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

That's penal substitution. And Paul can illustrate what he's talking about in the way that he actually does at the end of, no, I'm sorry, in the middle of Colossians chapter 2 where there's a couple of verses that give you a picture that most of us slide over in our reading and we don't appreciate the force of it.

Just listen. God made us alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

That's a reference to the law of God which prescribed retribution for sin. This he set aside, Paul continues, this is God the father carrying through his plan.

[49 : 33] This he set aside, that is the record of debt that stood against us, the obedience we owed him and hadn't rendered, you see. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Now there's the picture. If you and I had stood with the apostles and Jesus' mother before the cross as watching Jesus die, well, we would have seen over his head at the top of the cross a large poster type notice declaring the crime, the alleged crime for which he was being executed through crucifixion.

And we're told in detail in the gospel what the accusation was and what was written on the poster. Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.

In other words, he was being crucified as a revolutionary, a political subversive, someone whom the order and peace of the community made it necessary to get out of the way.

But now, what Paul is saying is that if you look at the cross with the eye of faith, as to simply looking and seeing, as the disciples did, what you see written on the poster above Jesus' head is the miserable tally of your own sins.

[51 : 21] That's how it is that the German hymn writer could say, as one of the lines of one of his hymns, I crucified thee. I sent you to the cross, Lord Jesus, by sinning, by my sinning, which meant that out of the love of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit towards me, you had to endure the cross, bearing the penalty of my sin, so that I might be forgiven.

Well, this again is something that we need to understand clearly. This is penal substitution, the Lord laying on him the iniquity of us all.

Retribution for sin, judgment, I mean, and misery, judgment and punishment bring misery, that is part of the story.

It is the nature of God to inflict a judgment of rejection and the infliction of misery on those who have transgressed.

And in the wisdom of God, the Son was sent into this world to become our substitute in his character as the perfect sinless man, the sinless sacrifice, you see, all the way through the Old Testament, as you know, sacrifices had to be sinless, the perfect offerings, free from fault.

[53 : 02] And that's the truth about what he was in the Father's sight, but the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. Well, that's his destiny, that's his ministry, at least that's the first part of his ministry.

Ministry, remember, is the third word that I use, and I wanted to quote in connection with ministry, the words, the breathtaking words of Ephesians chapter 5, verses 25 through 27.

Christ loved the church, that's all of us whom he ever is going to save, Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

That's going to happen when Christ comes again. And then Paul comes back to the moral point that he's saying this to make, in the same way, husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies.

Well, on the basis of this word, I say, Christ's ministry has two parts. The first part is obtaining redemption for us.

[54 : 39] The second part is bringing it to us, or drawing us to himself to receive it and become part of it, in the sense I mean that it becomes ours.

We are forgiven and we are indwelt by the Spirit and we are being transformed by Christ through the Spirit towards the perfection which we shall all of us together in the body of Christ exhibit on the last day.

The clock has beaten me so I can't say any more than that about the ministry of the Lord Jesus. Remember though, it has these two parts and the actual bringing of it home to us is part two.

And then the fourth word I was going to go to turn on is the word integrity or integration. What I was going to develop here is the thought that Jesus, the Son of God incarnate, Jesus had it all together and was in perfect control of every aspect of himself in a way that none of us in this world ever are.

Sin has disintegrated us in the most radical way. You know of course that a great deal of our mental life operates in the region that Freud called the unconscious and we aren't in control of that.

[56 : 27] There's a great deal going on in our brains that occasionally break surface in our dreams. We can't control it. And in the same way we can't perfectly control our bodies either.

Again and again when we try we find that we're not doing it. now Jesus perfectly integrated as a personal self in the way that he was could be tempted but he couldn't sin and he had himself together in such a way that when temptation came as it did come remember the temptation story at the beginning of the gospel when temptation came his way he was able with all his powers to say no.

He doubtless couldn't achieve that no without a fight and I expect that the tensions within him as he resisted temptation were as great as probably greater than any experience that we've ever had as we have sought to resist temptation when temptation comes on us as a flood as you know emotionally it sometimes does we find that sometimes in our battle with temptation we lose we're trying to say no a total no and in fact we only achieve a partial no but we do in part give in and we have to repent of that later but when the Lord

Jesus was tempted he was able to say no and fight off the tempter and the temptation so that in fact the formula is though he could be tempted he didn't have it in him to yield to the temptation in any respect and so to sin you can say that the possibility of sinning was there in the situation but it wasn't there in his own nature so that in every situation where he was tempted he fought the battle to say no and won as it said in Hebrews 4 and verse 16 he was tempted at all points as we are but without sin he was tempted to do he was tempted to do the battle which the Lord Jesus took on him I've spoken of the cross and time doesn't permit me to go to town speaking about the crown that is the reality of the kingdom you know

I expect that the New Testament regularly presents the Lord Jesus as the enthroned king lord of the cosmos and of everything in it the New Testament also indicates that this is the mediatorial kingdom that is the saving kingdom which the Old Testament looked forward to in so many places the kingdom has now come Jesus is the king in it you and I are members of it if we have submitted to Jesus as our saviour and our lord and the kingdom of God becomes a force in the world because of all the people who are part of it and are seeking to count for Christ one day the mediatorial aspect of the kingdom will come to an end and it says in 1 Corinthians 15 that the son will then deliver up the kingdom to the father that is he will report to the father the work of saving those for whom you sent me to save and for whom I died that work is now done that's one of the things that will happen when Christ comes again and the church enters its final glory but as individuals of course we shall for all eternity be Christ's subjects and we shall be adoring him and fellowshiping with him and obeying him forever and forever that is part of the glory of heaven to which we look forward well these are the things that I wanted to say about the psalm's course this is my catechesis on the psalm's course on his incarnate identity which he retains forever and his mediatorial ministry

[61 : 49] I think that we all of us need clarity on these things things I think we all of us need regularly to contemplate these things and I am sure that these things are the basis for our daily fellowship with the Savior when you are fellowshiping with anybody in friendship you need to know who they are and the more you know about them the better the better the relationship goes the deeper it is well so it will be between us and Jesus our Savior and our Lord thank you for your patience in listening to this didactic catechesis I hope that hearing these things have helped I mean helped right at the core of your Christian identity and I hope that by saying these things

I helped to convince you that yes the catechetical way of instruction is something that we do need to get back to alongside our Bible study so now at last I stop and you start comments questions reactions anything thank you so much it's wonderful to hear you speak and my question is when you said everything is in God's plan for us and there was a falling at the beginning is that part of his plan in some mysterious sense yes it's mysterious because the Bible never faces up to the question in the form in which you put it but the Bible assumes that right from the start somehow sin has been worked into God's plan in such a sense that the final glory to which the Lord is bringing us all will be that much more glorious because it centers on our being saved from sin that much more glorious than it would have been if there hadn't been a sin problem for us to be saved from

Augustine had a phrase which catches the wonder of it although of course it doesn't solve the how and why problem the mystery is still there but Augustine said oh happy lapse fall that merited such a saviour happy lapse well that's the best I can offer as a nonce but that seems to me to catch the Bible perspective so I settle for it would you mind by the way if I sit down I think I can sit on this table oh here thank you so much beginning to feel that standing what happened to the people who never had a chance to hear and understand the plan you ask the most searching questions well what we got in scripture is an insistence that every single person is guilty before

God and is fallen and sinful by nature and does deserve judgment and rejection what you also have in scripture is an indication I think that's the right word to use an indication that is given us without explanation simply as a vision of what's to be an indication then of the fact that there will be in glory a fellowship of folk without number and Jesus will be celebrated as the saviour of the world well what these two facts it seems to me warrant is first of all that we take very seriously the fact that

Jesus tells his disciples to go and make disciples of all the nations so we've got to be concerned about mission about outreach about sending the gospel take or taking the gospel everywhere that it hasn't gone as yet and seeking to persuade folk that Jesus Christ is indeed the way the truth and the life and they need to come to faith in him and second the pictures encourage us to actually in the last analysis to leave to God the question of how wide his mercy is going to go and how many folk who we would never have thought of as candidates for glory will come within the range of his mercy somehow and be brought to faith in

[68 : 23] Christ somehow and therefore line up with the rest of the saints in the final glory we simply don't know at this point we have to admit we have no idea we do know that for instance in Muslim evangelism it is quite extraordinary how God through dreams in this generation God through dreams addresses one and another preparing them for faith in Christ God in other words hasn't bound himself or limited himself in the way that he's limited us for us well spreading the gospel is vital because as far as we know it's only through faith in the Christ of the gospel that anyone will be saved that's the rule that he's made for us but if he chooses to operate outside that rule and restriction well it's not for us to complain it's only for us to say that we leave the possibility we reverently leave the possibility open we don't know one way or the other we are still bound to think and plan and strategize on the assumption that unless people come to a personal faith in Christ they won't be saved and beyond that well we have to say in some shape or form this is our business spreading the word anything further is God's business and he hasn't told us everything that he's going to do so truly we don't know what we do know though is that we are not entitled to suppose that anyone will be saved except through personal faith in

Christ and they're the matter of rest I don't know whether you find that answer acceptable friend but that's the best that I or any other Christian thinker can do any more from me would you agree that a lot of people have difficulty imagining that Jesus had to live by faith yes I agree at once people do have difficulty imagining that and the reason is that they can't get away from thinking of Jesus as if he were a theophany that is God come looking like a man but not subject to any human limitations or restrictions now in heaven the son doesn't live by faith in the father sight is the quality that scripture teaches us to invoke there father and the son are in as close fellowship as they can possibly be and sight is the human sense that points to the closest fellowship that can possibly be

I mean if you think of two people in love with each other they want to be in the same room with each other and to see each other all the time that they're fellowshiping together well people as I say think in terms of Jesus as totally divine and as such living a life that's not subject to human limitations in other words a life that isn't in every respect ours at all and then they have this problem sort of boomerang effect but it seems to me that we have to say yes Jesus at all points lived a human life matching ours we live by faith and so did he and while he was in this world he wasn't living by sight in the way that he was before the incarnation and is now

I think that's the best answer one can give again scripture doesn't doesn't raise the question and the woman which you raised it it's all over is it Bill I hope not spiritually thank you very much so would you come again thank you thank you thank you so would you comeamat glad had a thousands of gentlemen come hope and come so we will dâ at