

Jesus has global impact David Mulready

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Preacher: Steve Jeffrey

[0 : 00] Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are a God who has spoken in the past and that you continue to speak today through the pages of the Bible. Please strengthen us today by your Holy Spirit and help us to put these words into practice in our own lives.

And we ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, advertising is one of Australia's most successful industries.

Just think of the adverts that you come across every day on the television, on the radio, on billboards, newspapers, magazines, the internet.

Companies spend millions of dollars to promote their products and their services in the hope that we will buy them, that we will spend money on these products.

Christians are into advertising as well. We want to promote Jesus as the only Saviour and Lord at every opportunity.

[1 : 09] Our message is about a unique product, not just another option on the supermarket shelf of religions and ideologies.

Your mission month that you're having at this time reminds us that this great task and privilege of proclaiming salvation in Jesus Christ alone is not just the job of the professionals.

It's not just the job of people like Chris Jones and Steve Jeffrey and Brian Tung and Sam and whoever else is on the staff here at St. Paul's.

It's not just the professionals. It belongs to every person who claims to be a Christian. We are involved in ministry and we are to be involved in ministry locally, in outback Australia and overseas. Isn't it interesting the way that the globe is coming back to South America? I don't know whether that means God wants to send you all to South America or not, but I'm facing Australia right now.

[2 : 25] So we're still there. So all around the world, that is our privilege. So let's look at our passage from Matthew's Gospel, page 950, if you like to open the Bible that may be in front of you there, to see what light God shines on this great task of making the Gospel known, of making Jesus Christ known.

The first thing that we notice as we look at the passage is that Jesus' true identity is recognised. Advertisers, going back to that idea, advertisers need to be sure that they have the correct product and that they market it accurately.

I never cease to be amazed at the news reports about surveys that are being held. You know, I'm 64 and a half and the only time I have ever been asked for an opinion was about whether the police do a good job once when we were living in Western Australia.

Who are all these people whose opinions direct our government and direct our media and all sorts of things?

I don't know who they are, but advertisers, I'm told, conduct surveys. They might interview 1,200 people and make amazing statements on the basis of 1,200 people.

[4 : 04] Labour has gone down and the coalition has gone up. 1,200 people say so. I don't know whether you were asked. But anyway, the advertisers need to be sure that they have the correct product and market it accurately.

Well, Jesus was conducting a survey in this passage, wasn't he, in Matthew chapter 16. And he asked two questions in order to clarify who he was.

The first question is in verse 13, which he was really asking, what views are held about me in general?

And then in verse 15, who do you disciples, who do you followers say that I am?

And as we look at the answers to these questions, we can note that the, first of all, that there are three suggestions identifying Jesus as a figure from the past rather than seeing him as unique.

[5 : 11] Look at verse 14. The crowd here. They replied, some say that you are John the Baptist. Others say Elijah.

And others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets. These answers contained dangerous half-truths. For Jesus did have some qualities in common with these great people from God's servants from the past. But Jesus transcends all of them.

He is unique and not simply to be identified as somebody from the past. And then we notice that Peter's answer was spot on.

Peter answered on behalf of the disciples in verse 16. You are the Christ, the son of the living God.

[6 : 12] Now do you notice what Jesus says about his answer? In verse 17. He says, Peter, you didn't work this out for yourselves, for yourself.

God has revealed this to you. He has opened your eyes to see who I am. God has opened your eyes to see who I am. And then we notice in verses 18 and 19 that the faith that was expressed by Peter was the rock, the foundation upon which Jesus would build his church.

And in which Peter would have a unique part to play in the early critical years. And I tell you that you are Peter.

And on this rock I will build my church. This rock, this statement of faith that you've made. And the gates of Hades or the gates of hell will not overcome it.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. And whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. There are many different sorts of Jesus who are proclaimed in the world today.

[7 : 32] These people who proclaim a different Jesus either discard the Bible's account of the true Jesus or they misinterpret what they read.

To tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ. To tell others about the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to know who he is. We need to be certain of our product.

We need to know who he is. We need to know who he is. We need to know who he is. We need to know who he is. Whom God has made known. Now this doesn't come by osmosis.

It comes by regularly, prayerfully reading the Bible. And it sometimes comes from somebody else telling us, telling us the news.

I was 17 when I had been hearing. I'd been going to Sunday school. I'd been going to Christian youth camps. But it wasn't until I was 17 when somebody preached about Jesus in such a way that God opened my eyes.

[8 : 43] To understand who Jesus was and what he had done for me. It took somebody else to share the truth about Jesus.

Exactly the task that all Christians have. And so Jesus' true identity is recognised. The second thing that we notice here in verses 21 to 23 is that Jesus' death and resurrection are absolutely central to biblical Christianity.

There's confusion today about Jesus' purpose in coming to earth. Some see him as a good moral teacher.

Some see him as a champion for the poor and the disadvantaged. Some see him as a great healer. Jesus was in no doubt as to why he came and the purpose for his life.

It's partly spelled out for us in verses 21 and 22. From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law.

[10 : 08] And that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Never, Lord, he said.

This shall never happen to you. Jesus came to die for our sins. He came to die on the cross and pay the punishment that our sins deserve.

That we might be forgiven by God. That we might become God's friends and enjoy him forever. Peter didn't understand this at first.

And he was actually rebuked by the Lord. Jesus turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men. You see, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus is absolutely central to true Christianity.

[11 : 26] Any presentation of Christianity which fails to centre on this historical event is a fake and needs to be recognised as such.

To tell others about Jesus, we need to know the truth. I wonder what you are doing at the moment to be better equipped in knowing God's truth so that you can better live it out and better share it with others.

Perhaps there's a course that you could be doing that maybe this church offers right now. Perhaps there's a Christian book that you could be reading or that somebody else, you might give to somebody else to help them be better acquainted with God's truth.

Being part of a regular Bible study group. Regularly being here or whatever church it might be that you regularly go to. Regularly sitting under the teaching of able Bible teachers as we've already heard from folk this morning that you have here at St Paul's.

Jesus' death and resurrection are absolutely central to biblical Christianity and we need to know the truth ourselves. The third thing that we notice from this passage is that Jesus calls for total commitment.

[13:05] Total commitment. Companies which spend millions of dollars on advertising don't do this half-heartedly.

Can you imagine in a boardroom with a board sitting around a nice large table saying, well, what will we do with all these millions?

Let's throw a bit at advertising. Every dollar is accounted for. Every dollar is spent in the hope, in the plan, with the strategy that it will achieve something in selling the product or selling the service.

They don't spend these sorts of amounts of money half-heartedly. They invest time, energy and lots of money.

They're accountable to their shareholders. They're totally committed to selling their product and making a profit. A Ford car salesman who drives a Holden is not totally committed.

[14:22] Becoming a Christian is actually a death sentence. That's what Jesus says. Death to self. Let me read from verse 24 to 26 again.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it.

But whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world yet forfeits his soul?

Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? Death to self. Death to my ambitions.

My goals in life. My happiness. My financial security. My popularity. Christianity is not about me.

[15:30] It's about Jesus and his plans. His interests. His global mission. We, like the company that spends money on advertising, we will be held accountable.

We're not held accountable to the shareholders. We're held accountable to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will be held accountable for our service for the Lord and what we hold back and how we compromise.

Verse 27, For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

to tell others about Jesus. We need to be uncompromising in our own faith. The way we live it out and the commitment that we call others to.

We're not calling others to an easy road. To a half-hearted allegiance. We're calling others to a total commitment to Jesus Christ.

[16:56] So let me ask you this morning, are we serious about being Christians? Are we serious about making Jesus Christ known?

And what evidence is there for our opinion of the answer to this question? How would other people regard your answer about yourself?

Are we distinctive Christians or are we, as Richard Cochan says in his wonderful little book, A Few Good Men, are we suffering from a chameleon syndrome?

You know, a chameleon is often an animal, a lizard or something that takes on the colours and the design and the atmosphere where it is so that predators won't be able to get it.

Are we guilty of suffering from such peer group pressure that we become like a chameleon and no longer be distinctive as a Christian?

[18:15] There's a danger. Well, we've seen today that what we believe about Jesus matters.

How we live matters. matters. How we represent him matters. And how we proclaim him matters.

May God help each of us to encourage one another, to pray for each other and to be serious about serving and proclaiming salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this wonderful passage from the Gospel of Matthew and we pray that you might help us this week to be distinctive Christians and to represent you faithfully and to continue to learn your truth, to listen to your voice so that we might proclaim your truth accurately and we ask it for Jesus' sake.
Amen. Amen.