

The Magnificent Jesus

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[0 : 00] Is there anything or anyone you would die for? Um, it's kind of a tough question to answer. Anybody I would die for? Holy cow. That's a tough one.

That would be a tough one. I'd have to have a little more time to think about that one. It's a hard question, huh? It is. I don't think people really take into consideration what dying for someone means. Anyone in this world you would be willing to die for?

Uh, right about now I'm not so certain. There's very few people I could think I would die for. Maybe my mother. My wife. Definitely. My family. They definitely have to be very important to me.

I don't know if I would die for someone. Is there anyone you would die for? Um, no. I love myself. Why should I be thinking of dying? Um, I don't think I would die for anything.

Um, no, not really. Not right now. No one? No one. I will not sacrifice my life for nobody. Nothing. Nothing. Because I would think in God's blessing he would want me to live. Is it 100% sure that I'm going to die for them?

[0 : 58] Or is it a possibility that I may can live and maybe save them? Is there anyone you would die for? Uh, depends. No. I don't know. No. I mean, it's the people who would do the same for me.

It's hard to tell. It's so speculative. If it was a cause I really believed in, like the environment. For peace, probably. I don't think I would die for a friend unless, no, I don't think so.

I will not die for nobody. I would like to live forever. Is there anyone you would die for? My family. My mother and my God and also my woman. Yes, I would die for my dad.

Well, if I was married, you know, I would rather die for my wife. My son. Put my life on the line for my country and my family. I think I would have to put him on a pretty high platform.

I'd have to have a lot of respect for him. If I was going to put my life on the line for him. Jesus. Jesus Christ. Yeah. That's probably the only thing I would probably die for. Would you die for someone who didn't love you?

[1 : 56] Um, that's a tough one. Why should I? If they don't love me, then why should I die for them? Would I die for someone who didn't love me? No. I'd like to think yes, but probably not. Probably not.

I guess it depends on the person. Like, if they're rude and, you know, mean, I wouldn't want to do it for someone like that. Can you ever think of a situation where you might die for, like, a criminal?

Um, no, not really.

Due to my selfish nature, I probably wouldn't. But I'd like to think that I would do such a thing. But I think if it came down to it, I probably wouldn't have that kind of a nature.

Do you believe anybody's died for you? I don't think so. Good morning, everybody. Let's bow our heads. I'm going to pray.

Father, as we think now about the significance of you sending your son into the world, his life, his sacrificial death, as we open the scriptures now, we pray that you would speak to us by your spirit and that you would grow us in Christ and grow us in our service of you.

[2 : 59] And we pray this in Jesus' precious name. Amen. I learned something last week. I thought that was a fantastic message that Steve preached last week. Matthew chapter 4 and across the whole of Matthew's gospel talking about the life of Christ and the significance of his humanity in facing temptation and making very human decisions and in the face of that having to trust his heavenly father.

And we saw very clearly that Jesus' death was preceded by a life which was well lived. Satan used every bit of deceit in the book to bring him down.

Jesus clung to his heavenly father in faithfulness and trust in everything. Unapologetically, I want to spend this first little bit recapping what we saw last week, partly for your sakes, partly for my sake,

because it was just so good to engage it.

But Jesus, taken out into the wilderness in Matthew chapter 4 and tempted by Satan, first of all, tempted in weakness, hasn't eaten for nearly seven weeks.

Satan comes along to him when he's really hungry and says, why don't you use a bit of that power you've got and turn some of those rocks into bread and have a feed? And Jesus' answer was, we live by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.

[4 : 17] Life is nourished and life is sustained, not just by the physical life that we have, but by the word of God and our response to what God is calling us to do. And so Satan changes tack.

He can't get him in his weakness. He tries for him in his strength. He quotes scripture. And remember Steve saying that the devil knows his Bible very well and he knows how to misuse it. And so he brings the Bible to tempt Jesus into testing God. I think testing God is, we put God to the test when we try to manipulate God into doing what we want rather than what he wants.

So I was thinking about that. Range Street's got a really nice lounge room wall that could fit a very large flat screen TV.

And I'm thinking, well, I'm going to trust God for this. I'm going to go out and buy the biggest LCD TV I can get down at JB Hi-Fi and I'm going to fill the wall with it.

[5 : 23] I'm going to max out my credit card. I'm going to dispose of all my savings because I know that the Lord owns the cattle on a thousand hills and he will give me what I need for the next fortnight.

See, we twist the scriptures, don't we, to get what we want. Can God provide? Of course he can. Will he allow himself to be manipulated by us? Not a chance. And then the final temptation was with what Jesus loves.

So Satan comes to Jesus, I'll give you the world if you will fall down and worship me. And Steve reminds us, John 3.16, God's attitude towards the world.

For God so loves the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life. And so Satan's false promise to Jesus, I will give you all this if you will bow down and worship me.

And it's like salvation short-circuited, humanity saved but delivered up to Satan by the son of God rather than to his heavenly father.

[6 : 39] Now we had a fair bit of discussion about this this week in our staff group. We had a wonderful discussion about this passage the other day. And I hear it's been talked about in some of the small groups. And people have had all sorts of questions.

I think that's a terrific flow on from what happens on Sunday. But one of the questions has been with regard to what it means for Jesus to be both sinless and perfect.

Jesus is unlike us in that he is sinless. We're not sinless. We're all culpable to the eyeballs. But in becoming perfect he had to live a life very much like the life we live.

Day by day making small and large decisions about whether he was going to trust the word of God or figure things out for himself. You may have come here this morning struggling with things like that.

Little things, big things, small temptation, big temptation. And in the end it comes down to do I have the faith and do I have the courage, the confidence to trust to do it God's way and not to do it my way.

[7 : 52] And Steve told us a story of a meeting with Glenn Davies, our bishop, not very long ago. And he asked them the question as a group of small group of ministers whether if Jesus had died as a baby would his short life and his sinless death have still achieved our salvation?

Would his short life and his sinless death, the son of God, still have achieved our salvation? And I think the answer is no.

He became a man. He lived the life that we were called to live but were unable to live. And he didn't become perfect until he had journeyed the lonely road of testing and suffering.

Walking that road completely trusting his heavenly father. And that leaves us here today. We don't have to speculate and say well what might he have done?

He did it. It's not academic. He delivered. And so there's this sense in which he is the perfect passage. He has lived not just the sinless life but the perfect life, the complete life.

[9 : 18] The testing of Jesus continued throughout his life and ministry. It climaxed at the cross. Passers-by ridiculed him saying come down from the cross.

They sowed the seeds of doubt. If you are the son of God. Or the religious leaders who were mocking and saying he saved others but he can't save himself.

And he's the king of Israel. Let him come down from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Don't let God rescue him now if he wants him.

For he said I'm the son of God. And so Jesus went to his death with nothing but confidence that he was safe in God's hands and that God would vindicate him.

In a sense Jesus lived the life of faith of the people of the Old Testament. Abraham would go to his grave with great promises made by God and not much delivered yet. Prepared to take the life of his child trusting God who was asking him to.

[10:22] And in the end not requiring him to. We as believers as we get older especially we stand at the graveside and we bury other believers.

And we bury one another in the extraordinary hope of the resurrection to a better life. We go to the graves. We go to the graves. We deal with death. And we trust a promise in something which we do not yet see.

I think when we give in to testing and temptation what we do or I do is I reach out and grab what I think is best for me.

I take what is the easier way out. And I hold back and say well you know effectively by my actions say I'm not prepared to trust and wait on God.

And it's almost like we say to God I can handle it. One of the things we encounter often in ministry and it's always a sadness is when the Christian young person marries a person who doesn't share their faith.

[11:24] And it's a failure to trust God that goes right back at the beginning when they decided that they were going to go out with that person because they sort of like one another. Very natural thing to do.

But it's our failure to trust God in singleness or to wait for him to bring a partner who shares our faith. Or a person who pursues their career and advancement looking for security in this world. You know we need to get ourselves set up before we can go and do some of the other things of life that might be required of us. And you ask this question do we really trust that God has a mansion in heaven when we have it all here?

We like what we've got here. Not sure that God's really going to give us something which is better. We like the rich fool in Luke chapter 12 who's got it all today and doesn't know he's going to die tonight and doesn't even think that we could lose it all and for what comes next. See when I sing I go for the short circuit.

[12:42] The quick fix, the momentary pleasure as I seek to fill myself or to bring happiness to myself or fulfilment to myself. The really big point that I took from last week was that Jesus' life was heroic in the most magnificent sense of the word.

His life, the life he lived is part of what saves us. His experience was very human.

He was subjected to enormous temptation and testing throughout his life. He was tempted in every way but was without sin. And so the writer to Hebrews chapter 4 says we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses.

But we have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are yet was without sin. Now understanding these things, I'll tell you how the sermons are working.

Last week was a one-off, this week was a one-off. I want to connect them because I think there's some things here that connect. So we plan two one-offs, God's given us a short series. That's how it's working.

[13:58] Understanding these things brings greater significance to a number of other passages in the Bible including Hebrews 10 where we are today. I'd really like you to have your Bibles open. I'm going to keep reading from the passage.

Verse 1. Hebrews 10 verse 1. The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the realities themselves.

For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered?

For the worshippers would have been cleansed once for all and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

It's a devastating critique of the Old Testament system of worship that God's people lived under and was given to them by God. The writer says that the law, with all its rituals and ceremonies repeated year after year, the writer tells us not what they could do but what they couldn't do.

[15:13] So he says it couldn't make the worshippers perfect, it couldn't take away people's guilt and it couldn't take away people's sins. So you go down to the temple. I think somebody's going to do this later.

I looked downstairs this morning and there's a little rabbit so I'm wondering if somebody's going to wring its neck as a demonstration in church or something. No, not quite. But you go to the temple. That's what it was like though.

You would go to the temple and the priest would kill an animal or bird that you had bought and they'd sprinkle its blood around and they'd burn or eat its body and then you'd go home.

And you'd be reminded that how serious your sin was, you'd still feel guilty and you'd still be struggling with sin.

That works, doesn't it? Consumer product, you'd be taking it back under warranty and getting your money back.

[16:09] The writer's damning about the old system. It doesn't take away sin. It still leaves you guilty. You are not perfected by it.

And then he quotes from the Old Testament, Psalm 40, to show that the Bible itself realises its own limitations in terms of the sacrificial system. Verse 5 says, See, a thousand years before, when King David wrote this song, he knew that God was looking for something beyond blood and body sacrifices and ritual.

God was looking for something more. He took the kingdom of his predecessor, King Saul, because on the occasion when he offered heaps of sacrifices and failed to obey the word of God.

And so David knew that sacrifices didn't make God happy, even though, yes, God was the one who prescribed them. He didn't desire them.

He wasn't pleased with them, but he required them. That's an enigma, isn't it? And so you say, well, what is he looking for?

[17:57] And tucked away here is a great truth that David knew, and the writer of Hebrews now applies to the life of Christ. Verse 9, he said, Here I am, I have come to do your will.

He sets aside the first to establish the second, and by that will we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Here I am, I have come to do your will.

Christ came wanting to please his heavenly Father. He was committed to doing what God his Father wanted. This is, you know, this is a tiny little journey this morning into the book of Hebrews.

If you go back to chapter 9, the chapter before, you would see that that chapter was all about Christ's blood which had been poured out. And it came to a conclusion in verse 22.

It said, The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood. And without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. But chapter 10 is different. Chapter 10 is about his life lived in the body.

[19:09] You put the two together and you've got blood shed and you've got life lived in the body. Christ is the complete package. And not only that, he is the priest who makes the one and only sacrifice to please God, but he is also the sacrifice in two parts.

His blood is shed, he dies, but his life is lived doing the will of God in the body.

So before Christ died on the cross, before the sacrifice occurred, before the sacrifice occurred, came a life which was committed to the will of God.

Here I am. I have come to do your will. He did God's will in the desert. He did God's will in the garden.

You know, he said, My soul is anguished to the point of death. If possible, take this cup from me, but not my will, but yours be done. And then the sacrifice came.

[20:32] He's on the cross and he says, Into your hands I commit my spirit. He trusted God to death. Verse 10, I want to whip across the rest of the passage.

Verse 11, Day after day, every priest stands and performs his religious duties, and again and again he offers the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.

But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. And since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.

Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this.

First he says, This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts. I will write them on their minds. And then he adds, Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.

[22 : 08] And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. This is the conclusion of a number of chapters in this book of Hebrews, which is all about Jesus and his great high priestly work.

This is the end. He is a magnificent saviour. His work is done. He's not like the earthly priests who do it day after day after day after day after day. Verse 12, He sat down at the right hand of God.

He's done his work. He's back in heaven. He's in the presence of his heavenly father. It is finished. Verse 13, He's waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool.

That's a wonderful expression. It's got a positive dimension. It's got a negative dimension. He's waiting for the whole of the created order. Every human being who has lived, is living or will live, is going to be under the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Subject to him. All God's enemies will be brought into subjection to him. And you might be a noisy Richard Dawkins, ranting and raving that there's no God, or you just might be the quiet and ignorant defier like I was.

[23 : 22] But it doesn't matter who you are, we will all bow our knees before the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians chapter 2, You know every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

And so we're going to be acknowledging his Lordship gladly and willingly or compelled against our wills, defiant to the end.

Ephesians chapter 2 says, Everyone is an enemy of God and subject to his anger until they receive the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. So he's waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool, yielding to his Lordship or subjected to his power.

And God is waiting. And while he waits, there is still opportunity to call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. What are we doing today? We're going to the more with the precious good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe in the power of God's word to transform people. We're praying that even today God would lead us to some who want to talk about the Lord Jesus and hear about him in a fresh and new way under the power of his spirit and that he might use us as his agent.

[24 : 40] I don't know if you realise it, but we have come into God's family because he waits. If the Lord Jesus had come back 32 years ago in the mid-1970s, I would not be in his family, I would be subject to his judgement.

You look around a church family like this and you wonder, if he came back a year ago, who of us might have missed out? If he came back five years ago, who wouldn't be sitting amongst us confident of the salvation that the Lord Jesus has brought to us, the mercy that we have received? And the passage finishes with these words, with one sacrifice, God has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

He's fulfilled Jeremiah's promise of a new covenant which would be written on our hearts. He has chosen to remember our sins no more because the sacrifice has been made and sins are forgiven. No further sacrifice is required and those of us who are in Christ are forgiven forever.

[26 : 01] Forgiven forever. Huge application for us. We know the reality of struggling with sin.

We can't save ourselves by adding more in terms of the offering to God. You know, I just beat myself up a bit more over this stuff that I keep grappling with. We can't do it. We have to continually come to the Lord Jesus Christ to trust his enormous forgiveness that he brought through a life courageously lived, trusting the word of God even to a terrible death on the cross.

If you've come here today with sin and struggle, bring it to the Lord and leave it with the Lord and remember that he has already acted to forgive it and chooses to remember it no more if we will leave it with him.

He is a magnificent saviour. He has run the race that we couldn't and he's won a victory over Satan which has determined the future of the universe.

Jesus is a glorious king. He's done it all and that calls for response. And I haven't got time today but I want you to just give you a little glimpse and see that the response that's called for is in the next

verses which is in Hebrews in the last part of the chapter.

[27 : 27] Verse 22. Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart with full assurance of faith. Verse 23.

Let us hold unswervingly to this faith that we profess. Verse 24. Let us not give up meeting together. See, Christ has done all this for us.

He has done what we cannot do. What sort of response does that evoke from us? It's a relational response. Don't stand away from him.

Come near to him. Keep hanging on to this faith that we profess. Where do we find that? The word of God. Cling to the word of God and know what Christ requires of us and do not despise this gathering.

Gather together with brothers and sisters. Encourage one another in the Lord in the things that we have believed together. Come near to him. Hold on to him in his word.

[28 : 32] Hold on to one another because the body of believers is the place where we keep encouraging one another to meet and serve in response to who Christ is, in response to the life that Christ has lived, and in response to the death that Christ has died.

Amen.