

God the Son

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[0 : 0 0] Father, thank you for your grace to us in the Lord Jesus Christ in revealing yourself to us in the person of your Son. And we pray now that as we come to the Scriptures that we would delight in him and that you'd help me to speak clearly about you.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Tim Keller has written in his book, Every Good Work, that people cannot make sense of anything without attaching it to a storyline.

You can't make sense of anything without attaching it to a storyline. So he uses the example, after the attacks of September 11, no one mentioned the event without placing it into some sort of narrative structure, story structure.

So some people said this is the result of America's abuse of its imperial power in the world. And other people said there are many evil people out there who hate us because we are a good and free country.

And so depending on which story you believed, you would be associated with either the antagonist or the protagonist. And your response and your emotions and your actions would be completely different depending which story is yours.

[1 : 1 4] And he quotes a modern philosopher and he said, and this is what he writes, I'm just reading from the book, imagine that you're standing at a bus stop, a young man comes up to you, you don't know him, and he says, the name of the common wild duck is Histrionicus, Histrionicus, Histrionicus.

And even though you understand the sentence, his action doesn't make any sense. What's it mean? And the only way to make sense of it is to try to learn the story into which this event fits.

So perhaps the young man is mentally ill. That would explain it. Or what if somebody, what if yesterday someone who was your gender, your age, your appearance, had approached the young man in the local library, asking him the Latin word for the wild duck, and today he'd mistaken you for that person?

That would explain it too. Or perhaps the young man's a foreign spy, waiting at a prearranged rendezvous and uttering the ill-chosen sentence, which will identify him to his contact.

And so he says, the first story's sad, the second story's comic, and the third story's dramatic. But the point is, without some sort of a handle on this story, there's no way to understand the meaning of what just happened, and there's no way to even know how to answer this man.

[2 : 5 4] So he says, if you call the police and it was a simple case of mistaken identity, it's going to be really embarrassing.

If you pick a fight with somebody who's a trained assassin, the result will be even worse. But in any case, if you get the story wrong, your response will be wrong, and if you get the story of the world wrong, if, for instance, you see that life here is all about your self-actualisation and your self-fulfilment, and it's all about you, rather than the love of God and knowing God, then you will get your life responses wrong.

We need to know God's story if we're going to know God and how to live in his world. The Bible begins with Adam and Eve living perfect harmony with God and his creation.

Life is good. Access to God was easy. They could converse with him in his garden. They could see him. They could talk with him. They could be naked with one another and with God, and they would know no shame.

And the tragic end to a great beginning comes when Adam and Eve go it alone, disobey God. He shuts them out of the garden, and perhaps the greatest tragedy in that judgment is that they are shut out from God's personal presence.

[4 : 18] They no longer know God in the intimate way that they had previously known him. They're shut out from his presence and they have lost access to him. And in some ways, the entire movement of the Bible is about how can we come to know God again despite our sin, our failure, and great wickedness, which is in all of us.

God's story is a story about our redemption. It's about us coming to know God again. The journey of the Bible is about how God chooses to reveal himself to us again.

It's about God doing something to bring us out of the deep darkness of our own sin to be able to for us to be able to stand safely in his presence. And he has taken extreme measures to make us safe.

Deb said already this series is about God. He wants us to know him. He wants us to delight in who he is.

And I've been saying throughout this series that we can't know God in his entirety. We can only know as much about him as he chooses to reveal about himself.

[5 : 47] We can only see as much as he pulls those curtains back for us to be able to see. I've also been saying that God reveals himself to us as three persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Three distinct persons who have different roles do different things but each of them is fully God. Last week I spoke about God the Father. It was a delightful surprise to me that he is to see that he is hardly known as Father in the Old Testament.

That was like an aha moment for me. It is when Jesus bursts on the scene that God as Father begins to be revealed. And Jesus' most common way of referring to God is as his Father.

And you see that Jesus shows us God the Father. He teaches us to pray to the Father, that the Father provides bountifully good gifts to his children, that anyone who has seen me has seen the Father and that the Father is supreme over all and the Father is wonderfully good and totally glorious.

Let me tell you, I got to sit with a friend this week who I've been talking to about Christ for the last three years and we didn't talk two ways to live but he asked me what I've been preaching and I told him what I'd learned about God the Father last week.

[7 : 05] I think that's evangelism. It's revealing what God is like. Today, we turn to his magnificent son. I'm going all over the place in the Bible.

You're welcome to try to follow with me. You might find I'm moving a little quickly sometimes. John 1, verse 10 says he was in the world. Speaking about Jesus, Jesus was in the world and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him.

John makes the extraordinary claim that Jesus existed before he was born. It's not the only place in the Bible that makes that claim. Colossians 1 tells us, verse 16, For by him, by Jesus, all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him and for him.

Both passages declare that Jesus, that the world, was made through Jesus. Colossians says that the world was made by Jesus and it was made for Jesus.

The world is the stage where Jesus will magnificently do the extraordinary work that his father sent him to do. The big word that we use is incarnation.

[8 : 26] God coming amongst us as a person and not just any person, he was the perfect person. So it's not, this is not some eastern doctrine of reincarnation where creatures go round and round in endless cycles of existence.

existence. This is the incarnation coming into the world, God coming into the world in the person of his son. So the creator God of the universe enters into his creation in the person of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew's gospel goes to a lot of trouble to help us to understand that Jesus wasn't born because Mary and Joseph had premarital sex and something went wrong. It is very clear that Joseph is not Jesus' biological dad.

He was born because the Holy Spirit of God caused Jesus to be conceived in Mary while she was a virgin. Our creator became like us, his creatures, except that he was without sin, he was God himself entering our world and he grew to become the perfect human being, he was prepared to be, being prepared to be a perfect sacrifice.

So Jesus is human and in some ways that's clear. He was born, he lived, he cried, he laughed, he had friends and he had enemies, he showed compassion and mercy, he got hungry, he suffered, he grieved.

[10 : 04] Hebrews chapter 5 says he is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and going astray since he himself is subject to weakness. Now I don't know about you but I think when we think human weakness we think sin and failure.

You know, I opened my mouth and said that sentence that I really knew I shouldn't have said. Or I went surfing somewhere on the internet that I knew was destructive.

Weakness for Jesus wasn't sin. It was experiencing the limitation of life as a flesh and blood person. It says in Hebrews chapter 5 that during the days of Jesus' life on earth he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death.

And he was heard because of his reverent submission. And although he was a son he learned obedience from what he suffered and once made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

He hungered in the desert for 40 days of testing. He experienced deep grief when his friend John the Baptist was beheaded. He was abandoned by many disciples in John chapter 6 when they didn't understand his teaching.

[11 : 29] His suffering was unjust. He did such good to so many people and the leaders of the nations hated him for it. They falsely accused him of being empowered by Satan.

He was bashed nearly to death. He was executed by suffocating on a cross because people had lied at his trial. God my whole message last week was that Jesus is the one who reveals the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and every true thing that we know about the Father is revealed by his obedient son.

Jesus had a difficult life and he persevered in that difficult life absolutely dependent on his heavenly Father.

His amazingly selfless prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before he died he fell with his face to the ground and he prayed my Father if it is possible may this cup be taken from me yet not my will but as you will my Father if possible yet not what I want but what you want.

He's the Lord's prayer personified. Your kingdom come O God your will be done ahead of mine.

[13 : 19] It's a prayer of dependent trust Father I am hurting in this moment but I trust in your good will and your purposes.

You know when we hurt what do we want to do? We really want to tell God what he needs to do to get us out of this mess. Take this pain away from him.

And you see in Jesus that he doesn't hesitate to tell his Father that he is hurting but he does not insist on his way out he trusts his Father's plans and purposes being for good.

Three times in Matthew's gospel he teaches his disciples that he's going to suffer at the hands of the religious leaders that he will die and three days later he will rise.

He was trusting that his Father was going to raise him from the dead by faith. Hebrews chapter 10 says it another way it says therefore when Christ came into the world he said sacrifice an offering you did not desire but a body you prepared for me.

[14 : 32] With burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. But then I said here I am it is written about me in the scroll I have come to do your will O God.

So Christ came into the world he accepted the limitations of a human body he was sinless his sinless body became the only possible sacrifice for our sins there is no other perfect person.

Isn't that a relief that we don't even have to look for one or try to be? But more amazing still is the view that Christ had of himself in Mark 10 Jesus has been teaching his disciples about dark days ahead and he's going about this really serious teaching which is obviously causing him a reasonable amount of grief and the disciples are bickering about status and position.

And James and John they make their move and they ask for special position in heaven ahead of the rest. And there is this very unedifying argument about who will have the most important place in heaven.

We could try here this morning I wonder who it's and Paul's will be more important in heaven. It's embarrassing and it's extremely unhelpful.

[16 : 20] And Jesus says if you are going to be great learn to be a servant a slave or a servant. And he explains his own life and his mission. For verse 45 Mark 10 verse 45 this is a keeper this is one of those verses you learn and you remember forever.

The son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Philippians chapter 2 is an awesome hymn of praise to Christ describing his mission.

The one who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant a slave being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross.

And therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

God the Son absolutely equal with God in nature didn't try to cling to the rights of his position.

[17 : 49] it's been called God's great bungee jump left heaven stepped away from entitlement and prestige and honour and fell face forward and smashed into the earth.

As a man he allowed himself to be subjected to indignity and humiliation ultimately God permitted his creatures to do their worst to him they tried to snatch the kingdom from God by launching an all-out assault on his son.

And Jesus anticipated what was going to happen when he retold the parable of the vineyard from Isaiah and applied it to his own rejection. The man who owned the vineyard he put tenants in charge.

The tenants refused to acknowledge the owner by not paying the rent. They beat and killed the messengers who were seen climaxing in the death even of John the Baptist. and finally he says I will send my son whom I love they will respect him and the tenants see the son and they decide to kill him and steal the kingdom and the inheritance for themselves.

to reject Jesus is the most awful expression of our rejection of God the Father.

[19 : 21] It's as though we have tried to seize God with our own hands and sought to destroy him it is the most terrible thing to have been done in the whole of human history.

and God holds us all culpable because it is the ultimate re-expression of Adam and Eve's sins. We shut God out of our lives we try to kick him out of his garden and destroy him forever.

It is great wickedness. God's point of view Psalm 2 says he laughs not because he thinks our efforts are funny but because they are so puny and ridiculously ineffective.

He deals with the rejection of his son by vindicating in a flash he makes him alive again. We did our worst to kick God out of the picture and he reverses it in an instant and raises him as king in heaven.

So Psalm Philippians chapter 2 therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[20 : 50] Yes. So God has vindicated his son and we are accountable to him whether we like it or not. The son of God has conquered through service.

He didn't seek glory. He was given it by his heavenly father. His ultimate ministry was to submit to his father's will and lay down his life. In John 10 he says the reason that my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again.

No one takes it from me but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I receive from my father.

Brothers and sisters we cannot emulate Christ in perfection and that's not what he calls us to do. His sacrifice is unique.

His personhood is unique. He is God himself fully God. He is also fully a person. And he has taken perfect humanity in himself into heaven right now.

[22 : 05] But we must take heed of what he has said to his disciples when they are arguing over status and position. I have known a lot of joy since coming to St. Paul's and I have done a lot of growing too.

I have experienced things I have never experienced before and worked in a team which has just been wonderful. But let me tell you that what I find very difficult and it has been a significant problem here that has occurred over and over and over again.

People who push hard for things to be done their way. Now let me tell you I have got my own willfulness so I am probably a player in this as well.

But this is how we do it. Don't you know who I am? This is my ministry at St. Paul's. When I went to my last parish 13 years ago a woman was on my doorstep in the first few days and she said I am the women's evangelist use me.

Let me tell you when you first go to a parish you are like a rabbit in headlights. You are trying to get a handle on this strange new place and I didn't meet her expectations.

[23 : 29] But what she couldn't see was she brought to me a very exalted view of herself as an evangelist. And she saw herself as better than others.

And she pushed herself forward over others. And she didn't get the recognition that she thought she deserved and she left. Now she wasn't giftless and she wasn't Christless and she could have been a huge help in our church with her gifts and her heart for the Lord Jesus if she had just come forward and asked how can I serve these are some of the things I think I can do.

but she came as a Lord and not as a servant. Jesus says if you are going to be great learn to be a slave or a servant.

Service is ministry. And the word means the same thing. The ministries that Christ gives us are not so that we can glory over one another and say how important we are.

He allows us to serve for the benefit of his people and his purposes. So whenever we slip into a mindset of what about me, it might be appropriate to us sometimes but other times we lose our servant-heartedness focus becomes and the focus becomes me and I lose my focus on my master's business.

[25 : 17] I love some of the work that Deb's been done helping us to think about the mindset that we bring to church. You know, the people in the car park in the morning, they're not just trying to line up cars and maximise space so that we can get 51 cars instead of 50 into the car park.

That's not what it's about. They're welcomers. They're the first point of contact when a new person comes to church and drives into our car park.

And so they have this wonderful opportunity to communicate to people that we're really glad to see this. We're glad for you to be here. Is there anything that you need to know from us in terms of where to go or who's who or what's what?

They help people. And so a servant is a person who operates with the other in mind and not with their own to-do list.

When my child or my spouse is needing and hurting or crying, are they just this bother and trouble to what I plan to do?

[26 : 25] Or do I see myself as their chief provider and carer and respond accordingly? It comes from Jesus.

The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. The last thing I want us to see is that Jesus both identifies as God and is worshipped as God.

And when people like Jehovah's Witnesses want to tell you that Jesus isn't God, know these things. Colossians chapter 2 and John chapter 12 describe Jesus' victory at the cross in cosmic terms.

Colossians 2 15, having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them by the cross. In John chapter 12, now is the time for judgment on this world.

Now the prince of this world will be driven out but I when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself. in Mark chapter 2, Jesus heals the paralyzed man that the religious leaders, when Jesus heals the paralyzed man in Mark 2, the religious leaders are scandalized when Jesus says to this man, your sins are forgiven.

[27 : 42] Absolutely scandalized. And they rightly declare, only God has the authority on earth to declare sins forgiven. How dare you do such a thing?

But they don't recognize that God is standing in their midst. Throughout John's gospel, Jesus calls himself, I am.

It's the same way that God identified himself to Moses at the burning bush. Jesus said, I am the bread of life, I am the light of the world, I am the good shepherd, I am the true vine, I am the way, the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. He speaks as God. The end of the Bible, it's filled with thanks and praise to our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

There are three songs in Revelation 5, we read them often enough, but these are glorious songs and they're worth singing. The creatures, you get this picture, there's different groups of people who are singing the songs.

[28 : 42] So the first song is sung by the 12 living creatures, the 24 living creatures, whatever they are, that are in the immediate presence of God around you. around the throne of God in heaven and this is what they sing.

They sing this to the Lamb, to the Lord Jesus, you are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were slain and with your blood you purchase people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and you have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth.

They praise the Lord Jesus for the ransom price that he has paid to bring people into God's kingdom from all the nations of the earth, even us.

And we're a multinational lot, aren't we? They praise him for his selfless act of service. That's the song that's sung in heaven around the throne of God.

God. And then the third song, it's a song which is now sung by a different group. It says, every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

[29 : 57] It includes us. And we sing to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power for ever and ever.

The Father on the throne and his Son, the Lamb, receive our worship. They are worshipped as God forever. So brothers and sisters, God has shown his face amongst us in the person of his Son.

He has clearly revealed himself to be a servant in submission to his Father. Father, he is now our risen God, the King. And Psalm 2 tells us how to respond to such a mighty Son who is King.

Psalm 2 says, be wise, serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way.

For his wrath can flare up in a moment, but blessed are all who take refuge in him. If you do not yet know the Son, what do you do?

[31 : 19] You kiss him. You make peace with him. You find yourself a safe place with him so that you are not burnt when his wrath flares up in a moment.

Amen.