

Who Do You Say That I am?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 March 2015

Preacher: Rev Robert Sinclair

[0 : 00] Just had a few thoughts this morning about the text that the Lord reminds us of, that you cannot serve two masters. For either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will serve the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon. You cannot serve God and the love of money, or the love of your own self. But very often mammon and money and self are all together.

There was a story that I read more years ago than I can remember, about a man who went on a journey through the desert. And as they travelled through the desert, the days were very hot and the nights were very cold.

And during the night, the man lay in his tent and the camel was outside. And during the night, the camel poked his nose in to the tent opening.

He says, can I put my nose in here? It's very cold outside. And so the man said, yes. And then later on, the camel says, oh, it's very cold. Can I get my ears in here?

[1 : 13] And the man said, yes. And so he put the ears in. A little while later, he said, can I put my whole head in? And little by little, the whole camel came in. His front legs and his back legs, his tail and everything.

And the whole camel was inside the tent with the man. Well, what does that mean? What it means in the same way is because we cannot serve God and mammon.

We cannot serve two masters. Another illustration from the Bible is the one about Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now, Lot was a man who was the nephew of Abraham. And Lot moved away from Abraham and decided to go his own way and not follow in the way of Abraham.

And so he went and lived. He pitched his house or his tent near Sodom. And little by little, he gets closer and closer to Sodom until eventually he lives in the very gates of Sodom.

[2 : 23] And so there again, you see, you have to be very careful as to what you allow into your life. Now, your parents will teach you and guide you.

He will raise you in the knowledge of the Lord and in the discipline of your Savior. And so you'll be brought to know who it is to serve and who you shouldn't serve. In the same way as the camel took over the man's life and his old house, so Lot, he went and lived in Sodom.

And we find that although he was a righteous servant, yet he found himself so overcome by Sodom and all its temptations that he went and lived there.

So you cannot serve two masters. You cannot be of a disciple of the Lord and a disciple of the world. So as you grow up, learn to be a disciple of the Lord and to follow him and to worship him.

And so that will keep you safe in the world in which you live. May the Lord bless these thoughts to you. Let us then continue worshiping God in this time in Psalm 8.

[3 : 36] Psalm 8 at the beginning. How excellent in all the earth, Lord, our Lord is thy name, who has thy glory far advanced above the starry frame.

We'll sing the whole psalm to God's praise. Let us pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. from sangling's mud thou didst strength ordain for thy gold's cause that stole the might the avenging for me strength when I look up unto the heavens which thy own fingers bring unto the moon unto the stars which whereby thee ordain then say I quote his manatee remember is by thee for what the son of man the top so kind to him should be for thou one little overhouse in the angels play with glory and with dignity the planet has his head of thy hands works the maids in lord all the hunters keep his way all sheep and oxen yea and bees that in the field you stray love of the air fish of the sea all that passed through the sea are excellent in all the earth lord our lord it is thy name i'd

like us to turn this morning to god's word of the new testament and the gospel of mark and chapter eight gospel of mark and chapter eight in those days when again a great crowd had gathered and they had nothing to eat he called his disciples to him and said to them i have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat and if i send them away hungry to their homes they will faint on the way and some of them have come from far away and his disciples answered him how can one feed these people with bread here in the desolate place and he asked them how many loaves do you have and they said seven and he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground and he took the seven loaves and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples and he sat before the people and they sat before the crowd and they had a few small fish and having blessed them he said that these also should be set before them and they ate and were satisfied and they took up the broken pieces left over seven baskets full and there were about four thousand people and he sent them away and immediately he got into the boat and his disciples went to the district of Dalman Dutha the Pharisees came and began to argue with them seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him and he sighed deeply in the spirit and said why does this generation seek a sign truly I say to you no sign will be given to this generation and he left them and got into the boat again and went to the other side now they had forgotten to bring bread and they only had one loaf with them in the boat and he cautioned them saying watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod and he began discussing with and they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread and Jesus aware of this said to them why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread do you not yet perceive or understand are your hearts hardened having eyes do you not see and having ears do you not hear and do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up he said to him twelve and the seven for the four thousand how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up and they said to him seven and he said to them do you not yet understand and they came to Bethsaida and some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him and he took the blind man by the hand and led him out to the village and when he had spat on his eyes and laid his hands on him he asked him do you see anything and he looked up and said [10 : 47] I see men but they look like trees walking then Jesus laid his hand on his eyes again and he opened his eyes and his sight was restored and he saw everything clearly and he sent him to his home saying do not even enter the village and Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi and on the way he asked his disciples who do people say that I am and they told him John the Baptist others say Elijah and others one of the prophets and he asked them but who do you say that I am Peter answered him you are the Christ and he charged strictly charged them to tell no one about him and he began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again and he said this plainly and

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him but turning and seeing his disciples he rebuked Peter and said get behind me Satan for you are not setting things of God but on the things of man and he called to him the crowd with his disciples and said to them if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life for what can a man give in return for his life for whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him will the son of man also be ashamed when he comes into the glory of his father with the holy angels and he said to them truly

I say to you there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power amen and the Lord will add his blessing to that further reading of his own word let us once again praise God in this time in Psalm 139 on page 182 sing Psalms version Psalm 139b Lord you have searched my life and know my heart you search me and you know me through and through you know me when I sit and when I rise and from afar my thoughts are known to you sing down to the end of the verse marked 8 but four stands to God's praise amen Lord you have searched my life and all my heart you search me and you know me through and through you know me when

I stood and when I rise and from afar my thoughts are known to you you you you see my going out and lying down and you have perfect knowledge of my ways before I speak whereas and nothing I'd

before you and me, O Lord, and you have laid on me your mighty hand.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me too high, too vast, too great to understand.
[15 : 56] Where from your Spirit can I go and hide? And from your presence, Lord, where can I fly?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there. And in the lowest depth, in there I lie.
Amen. And I'd like us to turn once again to Gospel of Mark, chapter 8, and reading at verse 29.
Mark, chapter 8, and at verse 29. And Jesus asked them, Who do you say that I am?
Peter answered them, You are the Christ. Who do you say that I am? Peter answered them, You are the Christ.
[17 : 22] We find the Lord Jesus Christ here on his last journey, a long way from Jerusalem, and probably about 25 or so miles from Galilee.

He's in Caesarea Philippi. And on this final journey, he's like the prophets of old, going around the various places that he has been to and reinforcing his teaching.
But this is the final journey he's going to take. And a large part of this Gospel is taken up with that journey. Here in Caesarea Philippi, the Lord asks two questions.
Whom do men say that I am? And who do you say that I am? And so here, in answer to the first question, they reply that some say that you are John the Baptist, others say that you are Elijah, or others say that you are one of the prophets.
They saw him as some great man of history. Not living, but someone who was dead and from a past era. People today also speak of the Lord Jesus Christ in a very similar way when they speak of him with any degree of respect.
[19 : 01] They see him as a great teacher, a miracle worker, someone who speaks a lot of sense, and his teaching and his teaching is exemplary, his words of wisdom beyond anything this world has ever known.

But there are also others who want to lay great shame upon the Lord's name. if we think about the Pharisees of that day who spoke of him as being illegitimate or spoke of him as a blasphemer, someone who was making himself out to be God, all these were great accusations they laid at him. today we have people who make films about him such as The Last Temptation of Christ or even the recent film which talks of Christ as someone who was married and had children and who was not really the God that the scriptures speak of.
So we have these two tensions not only in our own day but in every generation ever since Christ came to the world those who see him as some great figure or someone who is to be mocked and ridiculed and despised.

Then the Lord asks them but who do you say that I am? And Peter says to them you are the Christ.
[20 : 46] In the Gospel of Matthew he says you are the Christ the Son of the Living God. You are the Messiah of God. You are the Anointed of God. And that is the way that all those who worship Christ see him.

He is the one who has turned our lives around. He is the one who has given us a new focus of life. He is the one who has directed our hearts and our lives in an act of worship and of love and of praise.

And yet as we see this answer from Peter an answer which was really echoed by all the other disciples also here are men of no reputation men who are uneducated with no influence his disciples.

And here is this man owning nothing but the clothes he stood up in. A man who went from place to place being hounded by the scribes and Pharisees whose teaching was continually being criticized. and he is saying here Peter is saying about this man that you are the savior of the world.

[22 : 12] You are the anointed of God. Now the Lord told the world through Moses that in the last days God would speak to the world through his son.

to be the deepest truth about God to be the most intense revelation of who God is. And if we were to read the opening chapters of the Hebrews we are reminded there that in these last days God would send his son.

He has been revealed to us by the prophets and the apostles but in these last days God has revealed himself to us through his son. There is no greater revelation of who God is. No greater truth of what he has come to do. No greater understanding of who Christ has come to reveal and what he has come to do in that revelation.

Hebrews tells us that he is the express image of the father. That nothing in this world was made without him. he is the creator of all things.

[23 : 29] And so such he is the God of all men. He is the creator of all things. And he has come to reveal not only the mind of the father but the very father himself.

He is the expressed image of his father. He is the one who reveals to us what God will be to us throughout the endless ages of eternity.

The human race has long searched after God. Many people in the world today they want to know the peace of God. They want to know peace and happiness the joy of God.

And yet they continually look in the wrong place. They want peace and they want happiness but they think that somehow that's going to be achieved by their own efforts and by their own wisdom. We are reminded there in 1 Corinthians that whatever wisdom we might have whatever understanding we might have of the great knowledge that the world has attained to in the last generations yet true peace and true wisdom only comes from God.

[24 : 40] It's not going to be found in the efforts of mankind and the wisdom of man. It's only in God and through our Lord Jesus Christ. Well here we are reminded is the wisdom of God and the knowledge of God and the holiness of God all brought together in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is God's only son. He is the revelation of God. Theologians talk about general revelation and special revelation.

Well, the general revelation is the world in which we live. The world reveals to us the power of God. It reveals to us the energy of God in creating all things that we can see around us.

He is the one who brought all things into being by the word of his power in the space of six days and all very good. He is the creator God. but he is also the God who so loved us that he died for us. He is also the crucified God. And so we have here in this revelation of God to us in the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the mercy of God manifested to us.

[26 : 08] Christ becomes God's high priest for each and every one of us because there is no other way by which we might be accepted by God.

He is God's high priest for us in presenting to God his sacrifice to satisfy divine justice. Nothing else is required of us.

The work has been accomplished. It is finished. But in spite of that we want to have our own impact upon God and our own input into the work of salvation.

The human nature is very real when it says it wants to be master of its own destiny. It wants to have its own impact upon what we are in God's estimation.

And so because of that we can never really find peace with God. The peace that passes all understanding. See our natural mindset to work our own salvation to work out what Christ has already worked out is really a barrier between peace with God.

[27 : 41] And it's a barrier because what that mindset reveals is that we're not receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation. it's only when we realize our own inability and our own ineffectualness in achieving righteousness with God or peace with God because of what we are that we will find that peace with God that passes all understanding in Christ Jesus.

But it takes the power of God and the wisdom of God to achieve that. The same power that was required by God to raise the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead is required to raise each one of us from the deadness of unbelief into the life and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And God's determination to make us Christ-like is what the grace of God really means. That's what God's grace towards the children of man means.

He is determined to make you and me Christ-like. He is determined to conform us to the image of his own son. That is his mission for those whom he calls to be with him.

And so we have to ask ourselves here, who do we think Christ is? Do we really believe that this person that we speak about, that we read about so often, that we come to church to worship, do we really believe that here is the creator of the end of the earth, to whom there is no variableness by the shadow of turning?

[29 : 39] The same yesterday, today and forever, the God who had no beginning, the God who will know no end. Do we really place Christ in this particular position in our estimation, in our worship?

Are we sure that we know who we believe? That in him rests all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is the only God there is. Yes, we speak about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three, one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

but these same attributes, they're all embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ. His power, his Godhead, his glory is the glory of God.

Do we see Christ as that? Do we believe in him as such? Do we fall before him in wonder, love and praise?

[30 : 51] That's the great God who made us and the great God who so loved us that he offered up himself for us and for our salvation.

And if we do believe it, what impact does such belief have upon our lives? Scripture tells us that the person who does not believe in God is a fool.

We ourselves as Christians would think ourselves foolish if we did not believe in Christ as being not God. And yet there's even greater folly in those who are raised in the Church of Christ, Christ, and those who make their boast perhaps of being in the free Church, and yet don't believe these cardinal doctrines of Christianity.

Or perhaps if they believe them, they have no impact upon their lives whatsoever. How many of us believe that Christ is the Son of God?

How many of us believe that Christ died to save us from our sins, and yet such belief has absolutely no impact on how we live, how we behave, how we relate to one another, especially how we relate to God, what our commitment is to Him.

[32 : 30] If Christ is God, that's something we can't leave to another time. It's the one thing neat that we have to deal with now. Many urges things appear in our lives, things we feel that we have to do with, things we have to deal with day after day, even sometimes moment after moment.

The world in which we live, lives at a fast pace, everything seems to become urgent. But there's one thing needful, one thing important, and the most important thing for you and to me and for me, is to close in with Christ's offer of salvation.

Come unto me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon me, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.

What a wonderful invitation for all of us to close in with Christ, to know him as Lord. there's no compunction there, it is an invitation, a loving invitation.

You know the greatest difference there is between those who are real believers and those who are not, even in the Christian church.

[33 : 58] People who come to church and those people who profess a belief, thinking is almost a safety net, that if they profess belief they will escape somehow hell with all its retribution.

And those who are Christians believe because of the love Christ has shown towards them, because of the grace there is in his words of welcome and his words of devotion even to us for all that he has done for us and for our salvation.

And so, in response, we must bow before him in wonder, in love, and in praise. then the Lord, later on here in verse 36, verse 34 in fact, teaches them that the Son of Man must suffer and be killed.

I think it's John Piper who talks about the greatest difference there is between Christianity and Islam. The God of Islam or the prophet of Islam is someone whose name cannot be mentioned, whose name cannot be blasphemed, and if it is, they will rise up in vengeance.

They will rise up in retribution against anyone who does it. If anyone defects from their faith, they will kill that person. The honour of that person has to be defended.

[35 : 27] and so the honour of their prophet must be defended at all costs. The honour of our Christ is that he gave himself to be misused and mistreated and to be crucified.

Islam won't believe in a crucified God, but our Lord is a crucified God. our Lord is the one who gave his life a ransom for the many.

See, the disciples thought that Christ was going to be the leader of some great world body, which was going to rule the world of his own day.

And when he tells them this, their whole world is turned upside down. They thought they were going to inhabit a bright new world. They thought they were going to rule a new world with one being on his right hand, one on his left.

They were going to be in places of eminence and prominence. They were going to be the rulers of the world in Christ's new kingdom. Their ancestors had longed for this day when Christ would come.

[36 : 51] When Christ would come and reestablish Israel and Christ would come and build this bright new world that had been promised to them and the way that the prophets had brought them

to understand the great secrets that God had revealed to them.

But how is that going to happen now for them? if they were being told that he was going to be crucified. He said to them that the Son of Man must be killed and after three days rise again being rejected of the scribes and the chief priests.

How is this going to bring about their new and wonderful world? But Christ says the Son of Man must be rejected.

the Son of Man must die. He must be killed. He must be smitten and rejected of men. Smitten of God even for us and for our salvation.

And there again is the honor of our Lord and the honor of false gods. False gods are not permitted. Those who worship false gods are not permitted to criticize and not permitted to allow anything to happen to them on account of their supposed glory, on account of their supposed place of eminence.

[38 : 33] But our God, our Lord came to offer himself, to allow himself to be crucified. And so that also brings upon us this realization realization that in Christ coming to this earth, he brings himself to that place where he will be blasphemed, where his name will be used in blasphemy under the sway word.

Can you imagine what would happen if the name of Muhammad was used in the same way as the name of Christ is used every day in our streets and even in our homes?

But Christ in coming to this earth knew that that's what he was bringing himself to for us and for our salvation. The Lord in the garden had already asked, before we come to this place, had already asked, if there be any other way, if it is at all possible, let this cup pass from me.

He does it's urgently, he does it imploringly, he does it in a way that begs the Father's mercy upon him, and yet in himself he knows, no, there is no other way.

There was another good enough to pay the price of sin, he only could unlock the door of heaven and let us in. And so the Lord Jesus Christ descends into the bottomless pit, where he engages with the devil and the powers of darkness for us, where all the energy of evil is directed at him because he is now bearing our sin.

[40 : 19] He is our sin bearer, he is bearing our penalty, he is bearing everything that the righteousness of God has laid upon him for us, so that we might be brought to know the salvation that is in Christ Jesus and the peace that will be ours because of him.

In our place condemned he stood bearing sin and a mocking root. And then Christ says, knowing all this, knowing that I must die and I must be crucified, he says, knowing all this, do you still want to follow me?

Do you still want to be rejected of me? He says, whoever will follow me, let him take up his cross and deny himself and follow me.

He's saying, if you still want to be my disciple after all I've told you, if you still want to be known as my people, well then there's a cost. There is something that you must realize that is going to affect you.

The cost of self-denial is the cost of associating with the one who has been accounted as a root out of dry ground with no form and no comeliness.

[41 : 56] That's what the world thinks of him. They think nothing of Christ. They think only express only his name as a swear word. They think only of him and those who follow him as fools.

But for those who are Christ's and they see him as the chief among ten thousand and the one who is altogether lovely. Christ says that he's got nothing to offer us.

Nothing but the loss of the world and the loss of worldly ambition. Remember what Paul says in Galatians, God forbid that I should glory saving the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

The world is crucified to me because it holds out nothing attractive to me, nothing that I really want, nothing that really sets my heart on fire as Christ does.

and I'm crucified to the world because that's how I feel. I'm an outcast from the world because of my attachment to Christ and because of my devotion to Christ.

[43 : 22] But if we pledge our lives to Christ, we can't have our own dreams. We can't make our own way in life.

without respect to Christ's desire for us. He doesn't demand of us anything. He always invites us, come unto me, seek of me, and I will give you great and wonderful words.

You know, some like great preachers like William Chalmers Burns. Burns. He was a wonderful man with a great ministry in the central district of Scotland.

Everywhere he went, revivals broke out. Even in Dundee, before Murray McChain came back from Israel, revival had broken out. He had great fruit in all that he did, and yet he felt God's call on his life and he goes to China.

And there he labors for years, unknown, not respected, called a fool, suffered many things, all for Christ's sake.

[44 : 44] work. There are lonely ministries up and down the land who labour faithfully, whose work is in spreading the gospel, and that's all they desire is.

They want nothing else. Some whose lives are spent caring for others. Those who are perhaps nurses or home helps, or others, who do for people that which they cannot do for themselves. Some might suggest that if you and I don't have success in this world, that somehow God's label on us as not being truly blessed by him.

But that's the inverse of what it truly is. We dare not pursue our goals and ambitions in this world. to the neglect of Christ, because more often they imperil their very souls that he has given us. Souls to worship him and to love him.

[45 : 53] He has called us to be his witnesses, called us to be his disciples, called us to be those who will speak of him. Sometimes we think we can be salt and light to a fallen generation by engaging in their pursuits and going to the same places they go to and being witnesses in their world.

Or we cannot. We cannot serve God and mammon. We cannot be light and darkness. engage in their pastimes or their pursuits or their activities.

Why? Because it's a battle we can't win because it's fought on the devil's own battlefield. world. Everything we are or everything we have become in every avenue of life must be consigned to the service of God.

Crying out to the Lord just as I am without one plea but because the Lord has died for me. And so love so amazing so divine demands my love my life my all.

And what should our response be? Oh Lamb of God I come. I come. Come to what? Come to a new heavens and a new earth.

[47 : 32] Come to eternal fellowship with Christ. Come to the general assembly of the first born. in heaven. Come to thee. Church triumphant.

The spirits of just men made perfect. There's a modern hymn writer who has written a hymn which speaks about the Father's love.

How great the Father's love for us. How vast above all measure that he should give a son to die to make a wretch his treasure.

May that be something we would be reminded of every day of our lives. May it be something that we would give our lives to and consecrate our lives to.

That we would truly be his disciples, his witnesses and his people. Let us then conclude our worship singing to God's praise in Psalm 91.

[48 : 38] Psalm 91. On page 381, Psalm 91. Leave that death in the secret place that the Most High reside, under the shade of him that is the Almighty shall abide.

We sing down to the end of the verse marked five, that's five stanzas, to God's praise. God's name. Amen. Amen. We are the in the secret place of the Most High reside, under the shade of him that is the mighty shall abide.

I hope the Lord my God will save, he is my red to still, he is my fortress of my God God and in him trust I will.

As sure he shall be safe and give deliverance the earth from subtle power near and from the noise of rest and the excellence his power shall be high my trust under his wing shall be his faithfulness shall be a shield and buffer unto thee blood shall be a shield and buffer unto thee.

[51 : 15] blood shall not need to be afraid for terrors of the night nor for the hour that doth lie I think why it is night and now may grace mercy and peace in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, rest on you and abide in you now and always.

Amen.