

Truly, Truly

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[0 : 0 0] we're going to turn again to the chapter that we read earlier john chapter 5 and instead of having one text this evening i want to have three texts this evening and i hope you'll see in a few moments time what connects the three texts together first of these is in verse 19 where jesus said to john chapter 5 verse 19 so jesus said to them truly truly i say to you the son can do nothing of his own accord and so on that's the first text and then the second text is in verse 24 again the words of jesus truly truly i say to you whoever hears my words and believes him who has sent me has eternal life that's the second one and then the third one is the next verse which is verse 25 again the words of jesus truly truly i say to you an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the son of god and those who hear will live you'll know right away what connects those three verses they all begin with the words truly truly and you might think that that was simply a manner of expression in the day in which jesus lived it wasn't it wasn't nobody ever nobody else ever ever used this expression except jesus when he was going to say something let's just stop for a moment and think about what it means it's not just something that we can pass over it's a translation the word truly or verily if you're using the king james version is a translation of a word which we use all the time it's the word amen it's exactly the same word except that when it when the bible talks about prayer using the word amen it just simply says amen but when it uses the same word in connection with what jesus is about to say it uses the word truly but it is both the same word exactly now we use that word all the time one of the sad things about the way we use the word is that we sometimes use it we don't know we're using it we use it so common to our prayer that we just say it as the end of a prayer and perhaps you haven't even asked the question what does it mean and why do we use it in the first place we don't think about it we all use it i hope that you pray this evening i hope that you are a person of prayer and i'm not saying it's wrong to use it it's every there's every reason why you should use it it is right to use it but it's not right if you don't know what it means so let's ask the question first of all what does the word amen mean it simply means this so let it be i say well that's just an expression no it's not it's a very important ending to a prayer in other words what we're saying to god is all that i have asked for and all that i have thanked you for and every word that i have used in praising your name and glorifying your name and expressing my love for you in the lord jesus christ i come to you and i bring it with my whole heart

and everything i have asked for i am asking with all my heart in all sincerity please lord let it be that's what the word means and that is the sense in which we ought to use the word amen it shouldn't just be a kind of a kind of a an expression that we use just in politeness or because of it's a formality and if it has been a formality let it stop now from now on every time you go on your knees to pray or every time you pray at the prayer meeting or in private or whatever then let's rediscover the importance of the word amen it's a biblical word it's a word that we have every right to use and because it's a word that expresses our faith our confidence in the lord lord so let it be i believe in what i'm saying i'm coming to you in all seriousness the problem is of course that for the most part that we're so distracted by other things that we don't give the serious concentration that we ought to to our prayer perhaps it's worth just stopping for a moment reminding ourselves of what prayer is it's a coming to god it's an approaching to god it's an approaching god with our desires and with our longings and with our needs and with our thankfulness and our praise and everything else that we want to bring to the lord and we how can we come in any less a sense than utter seriousness in what we're doing i didn't mean that we should be somber in our prayer there's every reason that we should rejoice in prayer and praise the lord with joy in our hearts even if we bring our difficulties to the lord we have every reason to rejoice in the lord and the confidence that we have because jesus has given us that access to god in prayer and so we come saying amen in the new old testament it was used in a church service where a person who would be leading the a prayer would end the prayer instead of him saying amen everybody else keeping silent the whole crowd would say amen perhaps that's a perhaps that's a some sort of habit that we should adopt to make sure that we're listening because when we pray in church it's not just the minister who's praying all of us should be praying and i hope that i pray for for issues which are in all our interests and so that you can place your amen to everything which is said even if we don't say it outwardly there's nothing wrong with saying it outwardly or under our breath or whatever there's nothing wrong with that but we should at least be saying it inwardly we should be agreeing and concentrating on as part of our worship that's what the old testament people would do they would the whole crowd would say amen when somebody led in prayer but whether it's old testament or new testament the way we use it in prayer is entirely different from the way in which jesus used exactly the same word we use it in our coming to god and asking for what we want from the lord and we use it at the end of our prayer in jesus name amen that's the way we use it at the end of our prayer we're wrapping up everything that we've said and we're bringing it to the lord and we're saying so let it be but when jesus used the word he used it at the beginning of what he had to say not to his father in heaven but to the disciples and to the crowd who were listening to him on this occasion for example but in a way he is using it in exactly the same manner as we would use it in prayer except that instead of asking and pleading as we do in prayer he is

announcing something in the name of the lord he's saying to them i come to you with utter seriousness and conviction and commitment and i'm what i'm saying to you is the truth on the authority of god himself so let it be and if there is conviction when we say so let it be there is even more conviction perfect conviction when jesus says something he says so let it be i am telling you i promise to you on my word this is the way it is so i hope that tonight that we perhaps have a different view of the importance of the word amen both in terms of the way we use it in prayer but more appropriately in this passage more more relevantly in this passage the way that jesus is using it particularly in these three verses and i want us to look this evening at the three amens in this great passage where his person was being called into question his authority was being called into question by the religious leaders of that time the first of these is found as i said in 19 verse 19 and when he uses the word amen in this verse he describes uses it in the context of the context of describing four things about his relationship to his father in heaven he's going to open up for us just in a in a small and a simple way the relationship that there exists in god now the first question i want to ask you tonight is this what is your view of god and where do you get that view from what is your view of what if you close your eyes tonight and to think of what do i imagine when i think of god what picture materializes in my mind's eye when i think of god for many people their picture is someone who is remote probably old probably old detached forceful possibly unreasonable tyrannical unapproachable who wants to who wants to judge and who wants to punish and who has little or no interest in your life or in mine that's the picture that many people have tonight when they think of god i don't know if that accords with the picture that you have but if it is then i'd like to ask that second question where did you get that from where did you get that idea from more likely it's a kind of collection throughout all the years of every misconception that you've ever imagined about god because as we live our lives and as we try to dodge god because that's what sin does in us it it twists our thinking and it kind of turns turns up the correct view of god on its head so that we end up with this horrible distortion of what god is and so begin to accuse him and begin to think that we our sense of right and wrong is better and greater and we try and excuse ourselves because of our unbelief but wherever you get that picture from you certainly don't get it from the bible it is true

that god has is perfect justice god is perfectly holy in all his being it's true but that's not the whole picture you have to take the whole picture as the bible gives us and the picture that jesus gives us here bears no resemblance to that remote figure that i've just described the picture that jesus gives us here is not of one single person but of a fellowship of an interaction a perfect interaction a perfect interaction in which there is perfect joy and harmony and unity of purpose and being that's god in his perfection now the bible goes on to tell us of course that god is three persons father son and holy spirit but here the lord is as if he's saying well we'll just leave the holy spirit to one side of the moment we'll concentrate on the relationship between the father and the son and he tells us four things just want to mention them briefly and please don't think oh this is too deep for me if it was too deep for for you it would be too deep for me and if it was too deep for us then it wouldn't be in the bible it's there for a purpose it's there because jesus wants us to know about god he says he said to his disciples he who has seen me has seen the father he came into this world to reveal god to us and this is one of the parts in which we are able to see what a privilege what a massive privilege it is to just get a glimpse a wee glimpse into heaven itself to see not the brightness and the majesty and the glory of god it's impossible for us to see that but we see something of the character of god and that's that is brought to us in the relationship that there is between father and son and of course the same relationship exists between father son and spirit i'm not i'm not trying to diminish the role of the holy spirit in any way whatsoever but the context of this passage is father and son he tells us four things he tells us first of all that that relationship is a transparent and an open one one in which there is no shame god doesn't hide anything from now in any relationship in any earthly relationship it's so marred by our own fallenness and our own sinfulness that there are things that we hide from each other there are shameful aspects of our lives that that creep in and they spoil a relationship to one another but not so with god because he is without sin and so that relationship is a perfect let's look at the let's look at the the four things that he tells us each of these four things they start with the word for verse 19 for whatever the father does the son does likewise the second four is in verse 20 the father loves the son and shows him all that he himself is doing and greater works than these will he show him so that you may marvel the third four is in verse 21 for as the father raises the dead and gives them life so also the son gives life to all those who he will and verse 20 verse 22 ought to begin with a four

I'm not entirely sure why they've left it out in the ESV it ought to begin with a four the father judges no one but has given all judgment to the son that all may honor the son just as they honor the father now I don't have time this evening to go into the minutiae of these verses and what they open up for us I just want to try and summarize it in a short and a concise way first of all as I said there is transparency in this perfect relationship between father and son you look into heaven and you look into an idyllic peaceful harmonious loving relationship you know I reckon that if you or I had the opportunity of seeing God tonight we would get the shock of our lives not just in terms of his majesty and his glory and his splendor not just in terms of us being shown up for what we are but I reckon that God would be so different to what we perceive him to be so incredibly compelling and attractive we would want to come closer and closer and closer that's why for example you have Moses in the Old Testament if ever anyone knew God he did he knew God face to face that's what we that's what the Bible tells us if anyone was close to God it was Moses and the more he knew God the more he wanted to know God he wasn't satisfied even with meeting him in the tabernacle he said

[17 : 20] Lord show me your glory nothing but the most ultimate revelation of God would satisfy him the more he saw the more he knew the more he wanted that would be the same with us tonight the more we know the more we want to know perhaps you've already discovered that as you've begun thinking seriously of God in your perhaps you've been drawn perhaps in the last few weeks or months or years you've been drawn more and more into a positive interest in who God is and the more you see the more you want to see the more you understand the more you want to understand you feel yourself being drawn to know him more and more well good ask him to draw you and keep on don't stop don't be dissuaded by anything tonight just keep on being drawn by him because it's his spirit that's drawing you there and perhaps you're an older Christian tonight and there's so much you know in the Bible the more we know the more we don't know that's the way you feel as an old Christian isn't it you feel that you're only at the beginning when it comes to God you feel that you've experienced so much and you've you've heard so much and you've read so much and you've learned so much and yet even at that you feel that you're only dipping your foot into the ocean that's the way it is with God endless that's why eternity a million years will seem like a day in eternity and those who are in the presence of God in heaven tonight they are just as enthralled after thousands of years and will be just as enthralled after thousands of years as they are at the very beginning that is the way

God is our view of God is so small and so puny we have to take him at his word but the other picture the second picture that we have here is one of love one of perfect love in which the father loves the son and which that love has a bearing upon the son the son exists in an atmosphere in an environment of perfect love we don't know what that is but we know something of that what we know that whatever we agree on in this world and disagree on we know that love is good you ask anybody from any tribe or nation or language and he'll tell you that love is good is a good thing nobody would ever ever say that love was a bad thing where did we get that peculiar quality from as human beings if it wasn't from God himself but yet we know that love is spoiled relationships are spoiled what spoils them our sinfulness spoils them but here is God and he's coming to us as love that's why the Bible says that God is love surely that alone should draw us to a greater understanding of God and to changing our perception of what God is is he still that remote figure not at all

I hope he's a loving God but he's also after telling us about the relationship the transparent loving relationship that there is between the father and the son he moves on to the purpose which God has for this world to save to raise the dead to give life now right away there's something strange there isn't there because death came into the world as the judgment of God in Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden God said to Adam in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die now God is saying he seems to be saying the opposite that where there is death I want to raise the dead and that's exactly what's happening he's overriding his own judgment and he is saving and rescuing and bringing life where there is death that's what the gospel is all about and the reason why Jesus came into the world to raise the dead both spiritually and physically today spiritually the bible tells us that we are dead and trespass and sins and God's purpose is to raise us by faith in Jesus Christ and then one day to raise us physically our bodies from the grave and he tells us also that he is unjust that God's justice is perfect for as the father raises the dead verse 21 gives them life so also the son gives life to whom he will the father judges no one but has given all judgment to the son the time is moving on

I must move on to the second the first amen then it tells us it gives us a window into the perfect relationship between the father and the son that's what you would expect isn't it from a man who claims to be the son of God who claims to be God himself you would expect not only his life to be absolutely perfect in this world which it was but you would also expect to learn something of the way that God operates within himself that's what you have I'm not saying we understand it I can't grasp this passage it's one of the most profound deep passages in the Bible but I would expect that from someone who claimed to be the son of God he's telling us here he's telling us how God operates within himself he's giving us information about God but it's very different to what we perceive God to be isn't it well I hope this is where we take our information from and I hope that we come and lay hold upon it by faith now a second amen it tells us this it tells us

God's promise for a dead world verse 24 what's God's promise for a dead world truly truly again I say to you whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life he does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life where now is this God who loves to punish and condemn and destroy where is this God here is what God is God it tells us he does he has he does not God's purpose God's plan his desire this evening his will this evening in Jesus Christ is that we as sinful human beings should not perish but have everlasting life and here is the promise now if you're reading that and you're asking the question how can I have this for myself and I hope that that is what you're asking how can you not ask that question there is the promise he does not come listen he does not come into judgment this is

[24 : 26] Jesus talking he has passed from death to life who's the he and how can I make sure that I am that person that person who does not come into judgment because I know within myself if I was to stand before God in all my wrongdoing I would deserve his judgment and his punishment and I couldn't point the finger at him as if he was unfair he would rightly and fairly and justly condemn me to his punishment but here's the promise of Jesus and it says that he has not come into judgment well how can I have this promise for myself he tells us at the beginning of the verse verse 24 he tells us he whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me that's it it's all to do with the word of

Jesus what is the word of Jesus well the word of Jesus is the gospel the message of the gospel the life of Jesus the coming of Jesus the person of Jesus who came into the world to save us from our sin the word of Jesus is the word that tells us that he died on the cross as the sacrifice and the substitute for our sin and rose again the word of Jesus is the invitation that Jesus gives to us tonight to come to faith in him the question is am I hearing it or am I not you might say well of course I'm hearing it you're talking loudly enough of course I'm hearing it I've heard it many times I've read it many times is that it well remember that the word hearing it's not just hearing casually it's hearing actively it's hearing the way that sheep hear the voice of the shepherd

I think I've told you before about we used to live many years ago across the road from a field and every day the owner of these sheep there was hundreds of sheep in this field every day hail rain shine didn't matter what the weather this land rover would come up to the fence and this guy got out of the land rover I won't tell you who his name was because you probably know him and he went to the fence and he just called his sheep as soon as he opened his mouth they came to him they flocked to him that's what hearing means it's not just hearing and saying oh well and good I'll carry on eating the grass no he was calling them to come to him and Jesus is calling to us in the gospel to come to him and to hear his voice and to turn away from our deadness and our life and the old life and the sinful life the wasted life and to come to experience the life that he gives us the new life that he gives us that's what he's in that's what he's about whoever hears my word just whoever hears my word and believes him who has sent me as eternal life now here's where of course you run across a problem in the modern world the problem of course is that people's perception of religion is very much the perception of the insurance salesman or the energy salesman that comes to your door and you know have you ever heard people

I used to get it all the time in Aberdeen and other places used to get people coming to my door trying to get me to change my energy company and they would tell you the benefit this that and the next thing and they would say look here's the benefit here's what you're going to be saving if you swap to my energy company then you're going to be saving this and your bill is going to you're going to save about 500 pounds a year or whatever sign the dotted line there's something within you that says well I'm not entirely sure and of course if he's a good salesman he could persuade you to do that by just the power of his presence or because he just didn't want your time to be wasted anymore so you would sign it but then you would get a letter a few days later saying you have signed up to change your energy company this is your opportunity to change your mind now that's the way people look upon our standing a relationship with God it's like well it's a pick and choose kind of thing it's a marketing exercise it's which religion will I choose what suits me what gives me the benefits that's not what

God is about tonight at all it's not about my choice it's about my standing before God now I'll give you another picture picture that we saw recently on our TVs Japan the tsunami people swept away to their deaths one man swept all the way out to sea on the roof of his house until the helicopter came and until he let down the ladder so that the man grabbed he was days out at sea until the helicopter came and he grabbed the ladder because if he hadn't he would have perished that's what it's about you don't need to talk about a second opportunity then nobody's going to say to him well are you sure you want to do this are you sure you want to make this choice it's up to you of course he's going to make that choice because it's his life that depends upon it that's what we're talking about this evening our standing before God and whether we're dead or whether we're alive and Jesus is saying he who hears the voice of the son of God will live he will rise and live the third amen it goes into that it tells about two resurrections one resurrection that takes place in this life in this world and the second resurrection that will take place when Jesus will come again the first resurrection he tells in verse 25 truly truly

[30 : 55] I say to you an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live what's he talking about he's talking about here and now he's talking about a person who needs more than anything you and I today we need to hear the voice of the son of God and there is a power in that voice what will raise us to a quality and a newness of life that we have never experienced before in this world it's called the new birth life it's called eternal life it's the life that only God can give you through Jesus Christ hearing his voice that's the power that Jesus has have you heard it and that's all that it is the voice of Jesus Christ it's not about making yourself more presentable before

God it's not about trying to tick the boxes in your own life in order to change your own life before God you can never change your life you can never make yourself acceptable to God don't start saying oh well I'll have to sort of adjust myself no can't do that only God can as you submit to him and surrender to him and as you come in faith and in repentance and as you ask him to change you and to raise you from the dead a dead person can't do anything to save himself he's already lost he's already dead and perhaps you're saying tonight well I just don't you know I'm hearing everything that you're saying and I'm so I so want what you're saying I've heard it before perhaps and I've so wanted it and I do want it but somehow or other I just don't I feel a sense of confusion surely a person who's been raised from the dead should feel differently to what

I feel tonight I feel confused I feel as if I'm walking around the darkness I feel that that yes I want to I want to understand and I want to have what you're talking about the salvation that Jesus Christ offers and yet I just don't feel I'm there well if you fast forward in the gospel of John to John chapter 11 there's a marvelous example there of what it is to become a Christian and the marvel the example is the raising of Lazarus from the dead here was a man who died truly dead he was in the grave he they put him in the tomb they put his body in the tomb four days he put a huge massive stone at the mouth of the tomb and he was there it was finished the funeral had finished all the mourners were gathered there and then Jesus arrived and he said take the stone away from the tomb the most absurd impossible ridiculous command that anybody could have made and yet they did it they took the stone away from the tomb and at that moment

Jesus said Lazarus come out I want you to imagine for a moment that you were Lazarus and all you hear is Lazarus that's the first thing you hear because before that you're dead can't hear anything until he hears the voice of Jesus what does he feel like does he feel happy does he feel as if he's on cloud nine does he feel as if he wants to leap up and down no he feels total confusion he has no idea what's happening but all he knows is the voice of he doesn't understand it doesn't know what direction to walk in doesn't know what's going on around him who's around him he hears voices but he hears this one voice Jesus and it's only in the process of time as the people as his friends and relatives as they remove the grave clothes that slowly and surely he begins to understand what is happening to him and that's the way it is with many a person who becomes a Christian some people understand it right away but a lot of people they don't they feel as if they're floundering around in the darkness like

Lazarus until that time that the grave clothes are slowly taken away and it begins to dawn on them that they've been made alive by Jesus Christ that might be you tonight maybe you you keep on listening to Jesus all you can do is to do what Jesus is telling you to do and that's all you need to do that's what it amounts to nothing more than that can't do anything more than that listen to Jesus receive what he's saying accept what he's saying and come to him in faith now the second resurrection I'm just going to disclose with this verse 28 again we're still under the heading of the third amen verse 28 do not marvel at this for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment now Jesus talking about a different resurrection beforehand the first time he's talking about the resurrection that takes place when a person comes to faith in Jesus

[36 : 56] Christ and that person gets raised from death to life now he's talking about the ultimate resurrection which is going to take place at the end of time when he will come again we don't know when that is but what we do know is for sure amen amen I am telling you says Jesus I give you my word I'm glad tonight that he does because there is no reason for you I should believe that is the most impossible promise that is that is there is in the Bible but God is the God of the impossible and come what may that will happen but look at this and I'm going to close with this those who have done good there'll be a separation at the day of when Jesus comes again those who are in the tombs will hear his voice come out everyone will come out not just those who have lived for Jesus but everyone will come out those who have done good to the resurrection of life that's another word for heaven they will go forever to be with the

Lord that's what Paul tells us but those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment now right away if you're following me you probably have a problem you'll probably say to me listen hold on a minute you've just been saying that it is those who trust in Jesus Christ and who belong to him that will go to heaven and go to the resurrection of life now Jesus is saying that it's those who have done good so does that mean that a person is saved by what he does it's a good question isn't it well there is an answer in this very chapter itself in verse 24 go back to verse 24 let's hear it once again truly truly I say to you that whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life that's what God commands us and asks us and invites you to do tonight to believe in him but you then you say well what's that going to do with doing good I'll tell you next chapter and verse 29 where the people asked him what must we do verse 28 they ask him this question what must we do to be doing the works of God what must we do to be doing the works of God verse 29 Jesus answered this is the work of God that you believe in him whom he has sent that's what God commands us and invites us to do tonight as the work of God to believe he tells us in verse 14 chapter 6 this is the will of my father that everyone who looks on the son and believes in him should have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day may that promise belong to every one of us this evening as we take hold of it by faith the

Lord Jesus has spoken let's pray our father in heaven we give thanks Lord that this is the word of God we give thanks Lord that we've been reading and contemplating upon the message of the gospel brought to us by the son of God himself with all the authority of God and we give thanks that not only did he announce that message to us but he died so that he might be the resurrection all and the life so that whoever follows him should not walk in darkness but have the light of life and though he were dead yet shall he live Lord give us that life the life that only you can give us keep us oh Lord from being prevented from coming to Jesus by our own sense of twisted reasoning and perception and Lord bring your word to us in a new and a living way for we ask in Jesus name amen