

Who are we in Jesus?

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[0:00] So this message this morning is about who we are in Jesus. And I really do pray that God blesses you through this word. I truly do.

So we get ears to listen, hearts to respond. Let's go. You know, the world is full of Christians that have been radically changed by knowing Jesus as their Savior.

Discovering who he is and accepting them. They realize that they have Jesus in them. I want to speak about a man called Rafid.

He was a Muslim. Rafid didn't like Christians. And in his village in Bangladesh, there was a young man called Mabir. And Mabir was a lovely Christian man with a heart for Jesus.

He annoyed Rafid to bits. He got under Rafid's skin. Rafid decided that he was going to have words with Mabir. And he said to him, get out of my village.

[1:02] Stop telling people lies about your religion. We don't want to hear you. And Mabir said, can you just do one thing for me?

Will you listen to one video? Will you watch one video of the Jesus story? And if at the end of that you have any questions for me, come to me. Come and ask me.

What this is about. Rafid decided, okay, I'll give this a go. Which was a miracle in itself. And as Rafid watched that video, his heart started to change.

He came back to Mabir. Mabir gave him the gospel. The gospel truth of Jesus who is his savior. If he would accept him. He would accept him. Rafid heard and listened and responded.

And he became a Christian. It was a wonderful, wonderful story of success. And there are many stories of success right in this church.

[2:01] People in this church have had the same conversion from not believing in Jesus to accepting Jesus into their heart. And to having Jesus within them.

But to understand who Jesus is in our hearts, we need to understand who Jesus is in relation to his father. Father. Next slide, shall we?

John 10.30 says, Jesus boldly proclaimed, I am the father of all one. He didn't lie. This was the truth. Jesus explicitly prayed in John 17.5.

Father God, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed. This just shows that he was there with the father in heaven before he came to earth.

Plainly put, God the father and Jesus his son have always been together. Even when Jesus left heaven to be with us in human form, he was still one with the father.

[3:02] Still indivisible with the father. Just as he is indivisible with the Holy Spirit. God tells us in Joel 2.28-29, I will pour out my spirit.

But Jesus tells us in John 14.16-17, I will ask the father and he will give you another advocate. Someone, a divine helper.

A guide, a comfort to defend, strengthen and help you and be with you forever. The spirit of truth. So being part of God the father and the son and the Holy Spirit, Jesus has a divine right to demonstrate who God is to us.

And indeed he did just that. John 17. Shall we? Back one. Thank you. John 17.26, Jesus specifically asked for this as he prayed to his father.

And I love this. I have made you known to them and will continue to make you known. That's even today. In order that you, the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.

[4:10] Jesus was saying through his unity to God and the Holy Spirit, we have access to this connection too. As Christians, who we are in Jesus, it was demonstrated by everything Jesus did.

In his willingness to sacrifice his life, his death, his resurrection, which is recorded in all the Gospels and recorded in the book of Acts, we can learn to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what

Jesus did.

So we're going to explore that together today. So being with Jesus. Next slide, Shelley. You've got it. Good girl. Everything Jesus did was for us and for the glory of God.

Alistair Begg says, if you wanted to know why you still are remaining a Christian today, even through all of this, it's because Jesus has sat at the right hand of the Father interceding for you.

John touched on that last week.

Because it was for the glory of God, Jesus spent time with God. He sat and prayed. And in prayer, this was a communication with him.

[5 : 18] This was being with God. When he prayed, he listened. And when God said do something, he did it. He sat in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He wasn't alone, but he might as well have been because the disciples were fast asleep when they should have been praying. But Jesus knew he wasn't alone. Jesus knew he had God the Father with him as he prayed.

And as Christians, having Christ in us, we are never alone on our life journey either. Jesus' name speaks for itself. Emmanuel. Emmanuel. God with us.

But he is also God within us. You know, Jesus didn't want to go through the pain of the crucifixion.

The feel that raw ugliness of sin.

Because it is ugly. It might look pretty sometimes, but it's all ugly. He knew it needed to be done.

There was no other way. God tried to let us see before Jesus came.

[6 : 22] But we wouldn't listen. We're stubborn old lot as human beings, aren't we? But Jesus knew this was going to hurt physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Because this was the first and only time that he was going to be separated from his Father. And he took his sin upon us. On himself.

Peter tried to stop it happening. I love Peter. He's got two boots and they're this big. I've got a size two feet with a size ten attitude. I'm always standing on somebody's feet.

But it's because my shoes are a size three. And I blame that. But anyway, I digress. Peter was thinking in earthly terms. He was thinking of the present. Jesus was thinking of spiritual terms and the eternal.

But this was an earthly war over Jesus' body, according to Peter. But it was actually a spiritual war over death, according to Jesus. Peter could see the war.

[7 : 23] But Jesus could see the ultimate battle. A similar experience could be seen between the servant and the master when we look at Elisha. I love the story of Elisha. It gives me hope when I'm feeling a bit low.

When I'm feeling a bit bogged down with everything. And I just can't see that there is a way out of this. Elisha was seeing the, or should I say Elisha's servant, was seeing the army of Aram coming across to fight the Israelites, to invade them.

And basically, he was petrified and he said to Elisha, What do we do? And Elisha said, Don't worry. Look up. And he asked God, Please show him what's going on in the heavenlies.

And as sure as anything, God opened up the heavens to show Elisha's servant this enormous army. He prayed for his servant to see the heavenly army.

But then Elisha prayed for the eyes of the enemy to be blinded at the same time. Isn't that interesting? And I think it's so interesting because I think if the enemy had seen that vast army, they'd have turned down and run.

[8 : 31] Wouldn't they? But then God couldn't have shown what he could really do. And what he did was really weird. Because when Elisha had prayed for them to be blinded, they were.

They came to Elisha and Elisha then led them into Israel's camp. And when they were in Israel's camp, he opened their eyes and they fed them and watered them and sent them home with a full stomach back to their master.

Now, that then resulted in Israel being left alone by this army. He's the key to their actions. Elisha and Jesus spent time with God.

And when anyone spends time with God, that's when we get to know how awesome and unpredictable God is. Because if he was predictable, guess what? He wouldn't be God. We'd just keep him in his box, wouldn't we?

But he isn't in a box and he never will be. Who would have thought that the crucifixion, death and resurrection of one would deal with everyone's sin and overcome all death?

[9:36] Who would have thought that blinding the enemy to God's power, giving them a slap-up supper and sending them up home to their master, would accomplish peace?

No one. It completely turns head and tail, doesn't it, really? But God did. And it's a lesson to us to see when we see the war, to look to the heavenlies and see God is in this battle.

The battle is his. And then look at what he says on the matter. Listen to him. And then obey. Mabir did and Rafid's soul was saved for eternity.

It's a lesson to us to do the same, to win the souls for eternity. If you're sitting here today, I am going to talk about Jesus, just in case you didn't know. But Jesus' crucifixion is also a lesson to us. To understand the enormity of our own sin. We've just taken the wine and the bread to remember why Jesus died for us.

[10:41] And all of the songs, miraculously, because I didn't tell anyone what I was going to be speaking on. But I am speaking on the crucifixion, of course.

But I didn't tell you, did I, Veronica? God knew. Lest we forget, when Jesus was crucified, it was our nail. My sin. Your sin.

That nailed him to his cross. Next slide, please. You're going to have a giggle. Can you read that sign there? I'm just going to very quickly say, 1 Peter 2, 22 explicitly states that Jesus never committed sin or spoke any deceit.

But we do. Romans 3, 23 said, for all who have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. It's a fact. As this sign points out, it was an innocent spelling mistake with a very hilarious result.

Our lovely Hannah was signing for a sign language exam and recording it locked away in the bedroom. And her lovely daughter wrote on this little note, Do not come in, mommy, sinning.

[11:50] Important. There's a little truth hidden in this mistake. We all sin, but we don't always see the signs. Do you get it? Sometimes what looks like an innocent slip could really bring us back and remind us to the realization we need God's grace.

Well, Millie's in good company, really, because half of us can't spell signing because spellcheck does that for us. The other half don't remember if it's got one N or two, because actually that says signing, not sinning.

Because signing is a silent G. Because Jesus dealt with us at the cross, does that mean we have a get out of hell free card? Absolutely not.

1 John 1.8 says, if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. To be with Jesus and to have Jesus in us. We have to tackle our sin problem ourselves, of course, with the help of Jesus.

We have to confess. We have to accept that Jesus took it and dealt with it on our behalf. And once we have done that and accepted Jesus as our savior, we can be assured that Jesus is in us.

[13:03] And then we daily strive to become like Jesus. So what does becoming like Jesus mean? Well, it's a bit like running the race.

In fact, the Bible tells us we run the race. And I've always wanted to be able to leave sin at the starting blocks. But it doesn't really always happen that way. There's lots of hurdles of sin along my running path.

But I always pray that I will run faster than sin. That it won't catch up with me. It won't trip me up. And I will leave it behind me.

Exactly where it should be. But we will never be sinless until we step foot into glory. We can look in the sinless one to help us in practical terms.

So this is the truth. Jesus understands. He didn't sin. But Hebrews 4.15 says that, For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

[14:08] Jesus provides a means to deal with our sin. John 1.9 says, If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus also provides a means to avoid going back there. James 4.7-8 says, Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Come near to God and he will come near to you. It's all about choice, really. Jesus, as a human, had a choice. You may say that he had divine help.

But then so do we. We have God and we have the Holy Spirit and we have Jesus as our divine help. Having Jesus in us is our help to avoid sin.

And it all comes back to being with Jesus, doesn't it? Ever heard the saying, A man is known by the company he keeps? Well, 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, Do not be misled.

[15:12] Bad company corrupts good character. Father, we are to keep company with Jesus so that we can be good company to everyone else around us.

Those are the people we work with, the people we play with, the people we sing with, the people we live with. We have to be with Jesus so we can become like Jesus.

And we are to put our own sin to death. That's what allows Christ to be in us and demonstrates, actually, that Christ is in us. Next slide, Shelley, I think.

When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we are considered a new creation. That's a nice thought, isn't it? We were talking about creation this morning. And we should be unrecognizable as the person we once were.

When Jesus rose in his resurrected body, he appeared to Mary and the disciples and about 500 people over 40 days. But he wasn't instantly recognized.

[16:17] Mary Magdalene thought he was the gardener. Thomas thought he was an imposter. And the two disciples on the road to Emmaus thought he was a stranger. Why was that? Well, it was understandable, you see.

Because Mary was expecting to see a dead and very beaten body wrapped up in grave clothes. Thomas had known the real article. He'd known Jesus in his life, human form.

So he wanted to make sure that this was the correct one. And the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, bless them, they were a bit downcast. And they hadn't quite realized that there he was standing next to them.

And it was because Jesus' resurrected body wasn't dead or showing the effects of being beaten. It was restored. Jesus' resurrected body was physical. Thomas got to put his fingers in the only scars that were left behind.

Can you imagine that? From the beating and all that, the whips and everything, the only scars that were left behind were the nail scars that we put into him.

[17:26] And he even ate fish for the disciples. That shows his body was physical. His body, his resurrected body, wasn't bound by ordinary physical limits either. He could appear and disappear wherever he liked, go behind locked doors, and appear on the road to Emmaus just at the right time to encourage those disciples who thought they'd lost everything.

Mary, Thomas, and the disciples didn't recognize him at first, but then they spent time with him. And by spending time with him, he revealed himself to them.

If you're struggling to get to know Jesus, spend time with him. Read his word. Mix with his people. Let them give testimony on how he is, the savior of their lives.

And then ask him to reveal himself to you. He will, if you ask him with a heart that really wants to see him. Next slide, Shelley. When we became or become Christians, we are changed.

Sin's original hold on us is beaten, making the old self unrecognizable. I love this glorious nugget of truth that comes from 2 Corinthians 5:17.

[18:44] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. Did you know you're new? The story of my conversion is exactly that.

I was the type of person that you needed to be able to have quick reflexes because I used to throw things. I was so bad tempered. And if you didn't duck, you got hit.

It was awful. But when I became a Christian, it changed everything. I became a completely different person. And my husband that was witnessing it, I didn't tell him I'd become a Christian for two weeks.

And over those two weeks, he'd seen such a radical change in me. He said, you've done something different. What is it? And I had the joy of telling him, I met Jesus as my savior.

And he took all this anger away from him. Now, he was quite relieved because he didn't have to duck anymore. I was relieved because I didn't have to throw. God speaks in small voices.

[19:49] And the lady that led me to Jesus was a pastor's wife. And she told me about this walk with Jesus and this pace that she had. And I wanted it. I desperately craved it.

But I didn't know where to get it from until she told me. And when she told me in that incidental moment that I was incidentally there, I became a new creation. Is God speaking to you today to become a new creation?

You'll know if he is. Your heart will be racing. You'll be thinking there's something in this, but I don't know what it is. Even though it goes against all that you think and all you can imagine, succumb to it.

Listen to him talking to you and find out more. Now, becoming the new creation isn't a one-time fixes-all solution.

It's a daily experience of the old being taken away and replaced by the new. Granted, I don't throw things anymore, but I still get bad-tempered every now and again. That's normal.

[20:54] But I also temper it and do my very best not to ever get that way again. I want that sin well behind me. But this is what becoming like Jesus comes.

I don't do it in my own strength. And this story, this example, will help you understand why. On a rainy Sunday morning, exhausted from a week of failing and trying harder in his own strength, a man called David sat in the back row of the church.

The pastor spoke on grace not as a one-time entry ticket, but as daily oxygen. Daily oxygen. That's what grace is to us.

The pastor said that following Christ was not about being perfect and not being an athlete who never dropped the ball, but about a child who learned to walk, falling down, accepting help up and getting back up.

Driving home in the rain, David decided that he would do this. But he didn't promise God he would never mess up again. Instead, he let out a long breath and prayed a simple prayer.

[22:00] It's this. Lord, I'm tired. I can't keep this up on my own. You're going to have to help me do it today. The road was still steep, but for the first time in weeks, David didn't have to, felt that he didn't have to climb it alone.

The truth is, is he's never alone. Neither are you and I. Galatians 2.20 says, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

We as a new creation in Christ, no matter how young or old we are, or how long we've been a Christian, have Christ living in us. And we don't do this life alone.

Next slide, Shelley. Jesus is running our race with us. Emmanuel, remember. We read in the book of Acts that near the end of his stay on earth in his resurrected body that Jesus gathered with some disciples.

We don't know why. There was no festival, but anyway, they gathered together. And at this meeting, Jesus painfully told his disciples this, that he had fulfilled prophecy, that he opened their minds to understand scripture.

[23:16] The scripture was told that the Messiah would suffer, rise on the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be preached in his name to all nations, beginning right where they were.

As witnesses to the fact, they were to be witnesses to the world, but not until they were fully prepared. Jesus then told them, stay where you are. It's hard when Jesus tells you that, isn't it? Stay where you are, do nothing until I prepare you. But they did. And then the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to do what Jesus did. That same power, that same message is for us if we know who we are in Jesus. I'm going to close now, and I'd like the band to come up while I just finish with this.

John 17, 20 to 23, Jesus said this, I pray also for those who will believe in me. Notice the ones who will believe in me through their message, the message of the disciples, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you.

[24:31] May they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I've given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one, I in them, and you in me, so that they may be brought to complete unity.

Isn't that lovely? Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them, even as you have loved me. Jesus first made the Father's name known, and he keeps doing this through his Holy Spirit and through his empowered word.

The goal is astonishing. The same love God lavished on his Son floods in our hearts, and the Son himself takes up residence within us.

Wow. That's why we're called Christians, Christ in us. That's why we are given the name Christians, because of Christ.

And because that happens, and we do what Jesus did, the world then gives a clear description, a living picture, of who the Father is.

[25 : 50] One who lavishes love upon us. Do you remember the story I told you at the beginning of Rafit with Mabir? How do we know that he was a Christian?

Because he would be with Jesus, to become like Jesus, and to do what Jesus did, and it's exactly what he did. He immediately stopped persecuting the Christians, any believers, because he'd become one.

Everyone who knew Rafit, and remember this is a big thing for a Muslim, everyone who knew him, saw the transformation in this man. He began to share his faith, the Christian faith, with his family, and his friends.

And today, his whole family follows Christ. Now, that's, this is a story. How do we know that Mabiru was the same?

By Rafit's conversion. How do we know if we're the same? When we do what they did, we be with Jesus, we become like Jesus, and we do what Jesus did.

[27 : 02] John presented a challenge last week that could not be ignored. I don't know if you got it, but I did. We had a garden that needed tending, and if we were truthful, weeds to be pulled out. It hurt, but it was so worth it, because I went home, changed, and a few weeds had been pulled out my garden, and I love that, John.

I hope today that God has been working and tending in your garden of your heart. There's three questions up here that I'd like us to consider as the band play quietly.

When we be with Jesus, are we taking time to be with Jesus? Are we considering this? But are we struggling to find the time? Well, perhaps this is the time to address this, whether you are a Christian or not.

Ask Jesus a question. Be with him and see what he says. And then in becoming like Jesus, well, becoming like Jesus is linked to being with Jesus.

You can't be coming if you don't know him. Do you recognize the old self creeping in? That was a bit like the weeding last week, John. If you recognize the old self creeping in, then come for prayer.

[28 : 24] But what if you're actually amazed and you're so thankful that God's working in your life because you are becoming like Jesus more and more and you see it and somebody said to you, wow, I see the difference in you.

Isn't that a reason to celebrate? And then we all want to do what Jesus did. Well, most people are kind, generous, thoughtful, helpful.

Jesus was too. But the difference between that and becoming like Jesus and doing what Jesus did is vast because your motive isn't your own.

It isn't for any feel-good factor. It's because you love the Lord and you want to do things according to his purpose and for his glory. So as we sing the final songs, consider these thoughts.

And if you feel like you want to come up for prayer, do, by all means. Don't leave it. Address it now. You'll feel heaps better when you do.

[29 : 31] Amen.