

Jesus, the Son of God!

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Date: 31 May 2026

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[0 : 00] We as a church have a WhatsApp group and yesterday was one of those days when every other message came through was about somebody who had fallen over and hurt themselves.

! Broken arms, bashed heads, falls of various kinds, health issues, struggles, all kinds of things. And you think, wow, what a day. And it reminds us that we live in a fallen and a broken world where bad things do happen and bad things happen to God's people.

But I was on a pastoral visit this week with one of our lovely ladies and we read together from Exodus chapter 15.

And God is speaking to the people of Israel. And he says this. If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians.

[1 : 25] For I am the Lord who heals you. And this has got nothing to do with the sermon, by the way. This is just something I felt led while we were in communion to share. It's intriguing that in the midst of the desert and the wilderness, where there are all kinds of dangers facing the people of God, God is saying to them, you need to hold on to me and trust me.

I am the Lord who heals you. When everything else is going on around you, when life is really tough and difficult, I am the Lord who heals you.

It's in the present continuous tense. I am always and ever the Lord that heals you. In your brokenness, in your pain, in your suffering, in your trials, I am the God who heals you.

And then it says, then they came to Elim, where there were 12 springs and 70 palm trees. And they camped there near the water.

And I thought that would be a lovely place to be, wouldn't it? When you're in a wilderness. And it's just as we've just been singing, God is a place of rest. A place for our abiding.

[2 : 40] A place when he will refresh us in the midst of the trials and challenges of life. So I want us to pray together. Can we just unite our hearts in prayer?

Lift before God those who need his touch. And that might be you. You might be that fallen, broken person who needs to hear this word, I am the Lord who heals you.

Mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually. I am the Lord who heals you.

Let's pray. Father, I pray in Jesus' name that your Holy Spirit will make those words live in the hearts of the people who need to hear it today.

the people who are hurting and sad and broken and feel lost. May they hear your Holy Spirit whisper into their hearts, I am the Lord who heals you.

[3 : 52] And Lord, for those who are hurting, those who have had accidents, those who are repairing, those who need restoration, may they hear the Holy Spirit say, I am the Lord that heals you.

And bring us all, we pray, into Elim, into a place of refreshing, a place of blessing, and a place of feeding.

Hear us, O Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. All right, on to the sermon. We're reading John chapter 10, verses 22.

to 41. This is our series in John's Gospel and it's entitled today, Jesus, the Son of God. John chapter 10, verse 22, it'll come up on the screen.

Then came the Feast of Dedication, otherwise known as Hanukkah, in modern day life. Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. Remember, it's not the previous feast in chapter 9 and 10, which was tabernacles, so we've moved on several months.

[5 : 02] And Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's colonnade. The Jews gathered around him saying, how long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.

Jesus answered, I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.

My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand.

My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one. Again, the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, I have shown you many great miracles from the Father.

For which of these do you stone me? We are not stoning you for any of these, replied the Jews, but for blasphemy, because you and me a man claimed to be God.

[6 : 06] Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I have said you are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world?

Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy, because I said, I am God's Son? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father.

Again, they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp. Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. Here he stayed, and many people came to him.

They said, Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true. And in that place, many believed in Jesus.

So we're kind of nearly at the halfway point in John's gospel, but we are approaching the last week of Jesus' life on earth. So the rest of John's gospel is taken up with the last week of Jesus' ministry.

[7 : 25] Everything else that has been before has been recorded at very quick speed, really, covering nearly three years of his life, but very selectively picking out those elements that show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that by believing in him, we might have life in his name.

That's John's purpose. John chapter 20, verse 31. Those who come every week should memorize that by now. That's been said so many times, at least by me. So that's the reason for John writing. He's been very selective, and you'll think when you read this, or again, if you've been listening to sermons week by week, you'll think, this has become a little repetitive. Jesus is making the same point over and over.

That's because John wants to make one point, which is that you get to the truth that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Now, I spoke about living in a fallen and broken world.

I'm going to tell you a story to begin with. Next slide. The story is of this lady, Corrie Ten Boom. Some of you will know it. She was a Dutch lady. Her sister, Betsy, and her father, Casper, were all arrested in 1944 by the Nazis.

[8 : 44] She was Dutch, and she had been helping Jews escape the Nazis as they were being rounded up and taken to the concentration camps.

Eventually, they were betrayed, and Casper was taken into custody. He died soon after, and then Betsy and Corrie were taken to Ravensbrück, where they spent the rest of the war nearly in prison. Betsy died in prison. Corrie escaped. When they were in Ravensbrück, they used to do Bible studies with people from all over Europe, whether they were Czechs or Poles or Russians or French or German.

It didn't really matter. They would do their Bible studies under candlelight, and every evening they did it, and they would get people across the way to translate what they said were life-giving words. Now, they were being deprived of their liberty. They were being effectively starved. They were being worked to death. Their captors had no desire to keep them alive.

[9 : 56] They were useful only as long as they could kind of endure the suffering of the prison camp. Eventually, Betsy got very sick, and when she got sick before she died, she said to Corrie, we must tell them what we have learned here.

We must tell them that there is no pit so deep that He, Jesus, is not deeper still. They will listen to us, Corrie, because we have been here.

And it's on the screen there. You might just about see it. Take a picture. You'll capture it later. There is no pit so deep that He, Jesus, is not deeper still.

So Corrie went on, and she shared that message after she escaped the prison of war camp. They let her out, actually, by an administrative mistake. She was expected to die there.

And then she went all around the world sharing the message of the gospel. And some of you will know this second part of the story when she was speaking in a prison, sorry, in a church in Germany, in Munich.

[11 : 21] And I'll read to you what happens next. It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former SS man, who had stood guard at the shower door in the processing center at Ravensbrück.

He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly, it was all there, the room full of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsy's pain-blانched face.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming, and bowing. How grateful I am at your message, Fraulein, he said, to think that, as you say, he has washed my sins away.

His hand was thrust out to shake mine, and I, who preached so often to the people in Blumendale the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man. Was I going to ask for more?

[12 : 30] Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me, and help me to forgive him. I tried to smile. I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity.

And so again, I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness. As I took his hand, the most incredible thing happened.

From my shoulder, along my arm, and through my hand, a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

And so I discovered that it is not our forgiveness any more than our goodness that the world's healing hinges.

But on his, when he tells us to love our enemies, he gives, along with the command, the love itself.

[13 : 32] I am the Lord who heals you. The healing that allows a woman so brutally abused to forgive the man who abused her and her sister.

She could not forgive him in herself, but the love of Jesus by the Holy Spirit that fills our hearts enables us to do that which we could not do by nature.

And this essentially is John's message. That Jesus is a life giver. The way, the truth, and the life.

That Jesus satisfies the longing souls of human beings.

the bread of life. The water of life. That Jesus can completely change us from the inside out so that we are born again and are able to do things that we could not do by our own strength or in our own wisdom or by our own innate abilities.

This is life-giving stuff. And it is contingent upon believing in Jesus as the Son of God. There is no pit so deep that he is not deeper still.

[14 : 49] Or as she said elsewhere, the victory of Jesus Christ in the midst of the deepest evil of man. The victory of Jesus Christ in the midst of the deepest evil of man.

She experienced it. She knew it. And all of us even today can know it no matter how difficult and painful our circumstances have been.

So as I say, we're at Hanukkah. This is the setting. Hanukkah is the Jewish festival of lights. Jesus is the light of the world who comes into our darkness.

If men believe in him, they will never walk in darkness, he says, but will have the light of life. Now

Hanukkah is not an Old Testament festival. It's something that came about because of what happened to the Jews during the Old and New Testament period, what we call the intertestamental years.

So, three to four hundred silent years. And during that time, Israel was ruled by different enemies. The Greeks, first of all.

[15 : 59] The Greeks imposed the Greek culture upon the world that they conquered. So they imposed the language of the Greek culture as well. And the pagan idolatry of the Greek culture.

And people were expected to accept that, integrate that, and become Greek because after all, they were the superpower and their culture, they thought, was the best culture. Everybody should follow it.

It's like the modern Americanization of society. Whoever's in power imposes their culture. But it was a very unstable world. Then the Seleucids of Syria took over, but they too liked the Greek culture and they had a very famous king called Antiochus.

Antiochus IV, just to confuse us like lots of pharaohs and all of that. And Antiochus IV, he called himself Epithanus, which means the superior one. Because he obviously thought he was the bee's knees.

He was like Alexander the Great. I don't know if Alexander gave himself that name, but Antiochus gave himself his name. I am the illustrious one. And he wanted to go further, so he imposed the Greek culture, but banned Sabbath observance, and banned circumcision, and banned the public reading of the books of the law, and he had them burned.

[17 : 15] And one day he went into the temple and he sacrificed a pig on the altar in Jerusalem. And that led to a revolt called the Maccabean revolt, where a man called Mattathias and his sons started a kind of guerrilla warfare against the Seleucids, and eventually they prevailed.

And when they prevailed in 164 BC, they reintroduced, of course, the worship of God in the temple, and the reading of the law, and circumcision, and sacrifice, and the festivals, and they had this festival, Hanukkah, because light had come, and light had expunged the darkness of the previous three to four hundred years.

And it was then celebrated every year from then on. It lasted for eight days, just like tabernacles did. It modeled itself on tabernacles, and people would light lights in their home, and they would sing Psalms 113 to 118, the Hallel Psalms, in praise and worship of Yahweh.

Hanukkah is a joyful remembrance of God's deliverance, and it is commemorating restored worship, and it takes place usually between November and December, sometime near our Christmas time, so you'll see it around the world being celebrated then.

It's a really important time. And it was at this time Jesus is once again in dispute with the Pharisees, and the main question they're asking in verse 24 is this, how long will you keep us in suspense?

[19 : 00] If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly. Now, this is a bit like those people who know me asking me, are you sure you support Newcastle?

It's like, yeah, I talk about it all of the time. I always manage to get into a sermon somewhere. Jesus got in the message that he was the son of God an awful lot of times in this gospel.

If he didn't say it outright, he showed it again and again. And he said, by the way, these are signposts, and these signposts are saying, I am the Messiah, I am the son of God, I am the light of the world, I am the bread of life, I am the water of life.

Before Abraham was, I am. How many times do I have to tell you? Now, if people keep asking you a question that they know the answer to, it is either because they want to irritate you, or because they are deaf.

And these people were not deaf. They just were irritated by Jesus. They did not believe in him. He knew that. They were really saying, who do you claim to be?

[20 : 11] Because they wanted to trap him in his words, and make no mistake about it. The Jews did not deny Jesus because of his miracles.

They knew perfectly well that miracles had been performed. What they disputed was the power that he had to do those miracles, where it derived from.

They said it comes from Beelzebub, the devil. Because he could not be the Messiah. Why? Because he heals on the Sabbath. He breaks the law. And they were interested as custodians of the law not to break the law.

Hence Jesus says, the scriptures cannot be broken. Literally he means the scriptures cannot be loose. They can't be disestablished.

They can't be removed. They can't be flexible in any way. That's what you teach. And so I'm going to use your law to prove that I am the Son of God.

[21 : 13] And he's going to give them evidence here to prove that he is the Son of God. the evidence of his works. Next slide please.

The evidence of his works. So again he says to them what he said before. I did tell you verse 25 but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.

If you want evidence there's plenty of evidence the evidence of my works. Now again you don't know this I'll tell you this you just have to take my word for it.

Jesus calls these in the NIV it's translated great miracles. I'd get great miracles among you for which of these do you want to stone me?

Now the word great miracles literally means good or beautiful works. Kalos the word and kalos refers to that which is lovely that which is morally praiseworthy that which is excellent and Jesus is saying why do you think I'm from the devil when I do such beautiful works?

[22 : 25] What are those? Well when they run out of wine at a wedding I give them wine. When I come across a man who is 38 years as an invalid by a pool and nothing or nobody can help him I heal him.

When somebody dies I raise him up. When a blind man is blind all his life I make him see these are beautiful morally praiseworthy works.

For which of these are you going to stone me? It's perverse isn't it? To think that this could be of the devil when it did so much good for the broken and damaged of society.

The works prove who I am. the works show that I am the son of God. This is evidence that I am the Messiah but you do not believe and you do not believe because you do not want to believe.

It is important for us to realize that there is plenty of evidence to show that Jesus is the Messiah the Christ the Son of God. Plenty of evidence but the reason why people dismiss the evidence!

[23 : 37] is because they already have decided what the outcome of their investigation about Jesus should be which is I'm not going to believe in him regardless of the evidence.

People are seldom neutral when to look at evidence we have what are called prejudicial ideas that give us a prejudicial bias that will confirm or deny the truth that is before us.

Jesus said in verse 37 38 do not believe me unless I do what my father does but if I do it even though you do not believe me believe the miracles that you may know and understand that the father is in me and I in the father this is one last appeal by the way this is the last time Jesus is going to talk to them about him being Messiah and God he's not going to do that in the final week this is his last public testimony and it's his last appeal come on open your eyes and believe the son of God is discovered by his works or revealed by his works next slide!

the son of God is discovered through relationship Jesus goes back to something he'd said three months before my sheep verse 27 and 28 my sheep listen to my voice I know them and they follow me I give them eternal life and they shall never perish no one can snatch them out of my hand my father who has given them to me is greater than all no one can snatch them out of my father's hand Jesus point here is two types of people in the world only two there are those who are not his sheep who do not believe and there are those who are his sheep who do believe there are those who are not of his flock and there are those who are of his flock and those who are of his flock praise God believe in him as son of God eternal security now let's just break this down let me show you this next slide again worth taking a picture of so you can spend some time with it later on this verse is wonderful my sheep that speaks of our union with

Christ we are his by possession we belong to him he is our shepherd and we are his sheep my sheep hear my voice this refers to our calling to be with Christ he has called us by our name and we are his to use Isaiah's words he says I know them this refers to our identity in Christ we are not strangers to him he knows us they follow me this refers to our sanctification in Christ we are called to be his disciples to be with him to become like him to do as he does no one will snatch them out of my hand this refers to our security in Christ he is powerful to keep us powerful to save us and he who began a good work in us will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus my father who has given them to me this refers to our election in Christ we have been chosen before the foundation of the world we come to

[27 : 01] Jesus through the father and the father be his disciples and then my father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one can snatch them out of my father's hand because he is omnipotent God and we are safe in his hands that is about however many points there's about that many sermons there for another day not for today wonderful privilege to be one of the sheep in Jesus flock how safe do you feel how loved do you feel how wonderful it is to be a child of God and Jesus says and you have eternal life what on top of all of that eternal life next slide please what is eternal life well the gift of eternal life in John's gospel is likened to water for the thirsty and bread for the hungry it exists in a relationship with the living

God we know him and Jesus Christ whom he has sent Jesus said this is eternal life that they may know you and Jesus Christ whom you have sent it is something to be experienced therefore now we know God now we are satisfied by God we are fed by God now our thirst is quenched by God now we have eternal life not will have we have and we have it for all eternity because on the day I was born again I can never die that's why Jesus said I am the resurrection the life he who believes

in me even though he die yet will he live and whoever lives and believes in will never die which one is it Jesus will I die will I live well you might die physically but you will never die spiritually you have the hope of eternal life you shall never perish no one can snatch you out of the father's hands and it's not just the future hope it is a present relationship with

God so we started with our aches and pains and we recognized we lived in a fallen ten boom and we wondered why she would allow herself to go through that and still come out preaching the gospel and worshiping God and when she died as a 91 year old lady there was not a moment in her life that she regretted that service for she knew that she had eternal life and she knew that one day she would be restored to fellowship with her sister Betsy and her father Caspar for they too believed in Jesus and possessed eternal life the son of God is revealed through his works he is revealed in our relationship with him and finally he is revealed in his words he says my sheep listen to my voice when they hear my words they make sense of them they ring true in their hearts and they respond to them by faith and they live their life following their pattern and their teaching and they model their lives on my life they do the things that

I do because they're my sheep they follow me now I love sheep you know I love sheep and sheep follow the shepherd and they listen to the voice of the shepherd and they will not listen to the voice of a stranger and I have tested that out and seen that to be true even as I tried to help a sheep that got its head stuck in barbed wire it went crazy when I tried to help it and then the shepherd came and spoke to it and it stood perfectly still and allowed him to put his boots on his head and push it out and hurt it even though I would not have hurt it but it didn't know me it didn't know my voice but it knows the voice of a shepherd sheep will do one thing they will follow the shepherd and hear his voice and that's what we should do one thing soren kirk was asked what is it to love God he says to love God is to will one thing that is that

I may hear his voice and follow him you want some advice about how to live your life listen to the voice of Jesus as you find it in the scripture and then do what he says and you will live a good life and you will be a blessing to others who get to know you Jesus said something that really upsets the Jews he says I and the father are one and they think that's it stones we're going to kill him because he a mere man claimed to be God and when Jesus said I in the father of the one he knew he would provoke them because he liked to provoke them to get them to think and they knew he was not simply declaring that he was one with purpose he was declaring that he was one in essence one in union with now it's a bit yet in

[32 : 25] John's gospel is 858 when he says before Abraham was I am he leaves it to John to tell us that in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was with God in the beginning all things were made through him nothing was made that was made etc you can go on through John's gospel and we have beheld his glory so John is very clear that Jesus is God manifest in the flesh he is the incarnate one John even says beautiful phrase in chapter 1 verse 17 he tabernacled among us your version translates it he dwelt among us but he uses the word tabernacle now if you know the old testament you know what the tabernacle was it was a tent of meeting and there they went to metaphorically speaking taking God with them when Jesus is tabernacling among us he is bringing God to us wherever he goes

God is there because he is God I and the father are one the same in essence equal in power and glory with the father and with the holy spirit so why call him son of god then surely the son is inferior to the father not in Jewish thinking the firstborn son the only begotten as he's called is equal to and has all of the inheritance rights of the father everything goes to the son but also think about it like this remember old Eli he had two sons Hophni and Phineas Phineas is a great name isn't it great name I love Phineas Hophni and Phineas don't know why I said that never mind but they were called sons of Belial and the word Belial means sons of worthless ones and Jesus uses that phrase well

Paul does uses that phrase to describe the sons of the devil sons of Belial so morally reprehensible beings that's why the devil is called it sons of worthless sons so they were sons of Eli but their behavior their character was so vile that they were called sons of worthless ones or think of John and James they were called sons of thunder because they got cross and they were rather dramatic personalities and they wanted to call fire down from heaven and they got excitable you see it describes the character and the being the essence of the people sons of so Jesus is the son of God and they object to this and they say how dare you say that and then he reminds them because they love the scripture he reminds them of

Psalm 82 it's an unusual little bit this isn't it from verse 34 is it not written in your law I have said you are gods if he called them gods small g to whom the word of God came and the scripture cannot be broken as you say what about the one whom the father set apart as his very own and sent into the world why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said I am!

God's son it's very clever this you see what Jesus is doing is saying this in Psalm 82 God refers to the judges of Israel who are judging unjustly and not protecting the innocent he calls them gods not because they have moral virtue but because they stand as human representatives of God in the sanctuary in the assembly and they did bad things and here am I doing beautiful works and yet you object to me calling myself the son of God that's contradictory isn't it and you say the scriptures cannot be broken see it's very clever he catches them at their own game if the scriptures cannot be broken and it's reasonable to call the judges of Israel however unjust and corrupt!

[36 : 51] they are gods then surely it is reasonable to call this person Messiah when you look at the miracles that he has done and when you observe his person and you hear his words there is plenty of evidence that Jesus is Messiah son of God one with the father if you want to have it you remember C.S.

Lewis once made a trilemma a dilemma has two points trilemma has three so a three pronged argument think of a fork and in mere Christianity he said I am trying to prevent anyone seeing the really foolish thing that the people often say about him I am ready to accept Jesus as great moral teacher but I do not accept his claim to be God that is the one thing he says that we must not say a man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher he would either be a lunatic on the level with you must make your choice either this man was and is the son of God or else a madman or something worse you can shut him up for a fool you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God but let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher he has not left that open to us he did not intend to we are faced then with a frightening alternative this man we are talking about either was and is just what he said or else a lunatic or something worse I have to accept the view that he was and is God now here's his point Jesus claimed to be God if he knew he wasn't God then he's a liar and you shouldn't believe in him however it's possible Jesus believed himself to be God and was deluded and deceived because he was mentally unstable but you shouldn't believe in somebody who was mentally unstable and when you consider the level of his philosophical and moral reasoning as well as the evidence of his works there's nothing unstable about him so where are you left he is who he says he is that's the logical position to adopt some people say

I need evidence well there's your evidence it's historical evidence but it's evidence and to not believe in the face of evidence just reveals the corruption of our minds and hearts Jesus says I am the son of God you want to know who I am I have told you the issue is will you believe let us pray Thank you.