

Jesus: Way, Truth and Life

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Preacher: Craig Dowling

[0 : 00] This morning's reading is from the book of Luke chapter 5.

! But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken. And so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.

[1 : 26] And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, I will be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him.

And he charged him to tell no one, but go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them.

But now even more, the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities.

For he would withdraw to desolate places and pray. And one of those days he was teaching.

Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.

And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralysed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus.

[2 : 29] But finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.

And when he saw their faith, he said, Man, your sins are forgiven you. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, Who is this who speaks blasphemies?

Who can forgive sins but God alone? When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier to see?

Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Rise and walk. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

He said to the man who was paralysed, I say to you, Rise, pick up your bed and go home. And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.

[3 : 38] And amazement seized them all. And he glorified God. And they were filled with awe, saying, We have seen extraordinary things today. After this, he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth.

And he said to him, Follow me. And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house.

And there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?

And Jesus answered them, Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Amen. Thank you, Karen.

[5 : 04] Thank you all. So, what happens when people meet, let's say, King Charles?

They say, Hello, nod, goodbye. And then they crack on with life, back to the same old. What happens when people meet, let's say, Tom Cruise, Daniel Craig?

And they say, Hello, can you sign this? Goodbye, life goes on, back to the same old. If you haven't heard, you're going to hear that Oasis are reuniting later this year.

And when they first announced it last year, social media went mad. All sorts of glorious comments and whatnot.

When the tickets got released, social media went mad again. There was all sorts of heartfelt spills on Facebook and Twitter, X accounts and all the rest of it.

[6 : 36] One guy, after getting tickets, wrote, Life will never be the same again. I got the tickets. All I've had is a normal life.

I have a mortgage to pay, a business to run, health problems, debt problems to take care of. But it all means nothing now that I have these tickets.

So this guy, whoever he is, will go and see the show. Shout and wave, sing and shout goodbye and go back home.

And, ready for this? Just like with Charles and Cruise or Daniel Craig, nothing, absolutely nothing will have changed. And all those mundane things of everyday life that he mentioned will be there in the exact same way, just waiting for him.

Still needing to be dealt with. He will be back to the same old. Now, what happens when people meet Jesus?

[7 : 57] What happens when people meet Jesus? When sick people meet him? Hurting people, grieving people, addict, money obsessed people, career obsessed people, sinful people.

What happens when a person meets Jesus Christ? Any person, any culture, any class, any nation. What happens? Verse 11. They get off the boat. Follow at a brand new life.

And never go back. Verse 13. They get cleansed. They get healed.

They get set free from any and everything. And they get healed and comforted like never before.

And never go back to the same old.

[9 : 08] Verse 20. They get forgiven. From whatever has held them bound. And never go back to the same old way again.

Verse 25. They stand up. Brand new. And walk out. Fully restored. Never the same again.

And never go back to the same old. Verse 28. Their entire aims, ambitions, plans for their livelihood.

For their career and how to make money all change. And they go off to fulfill kingdom ambitions instead.

They are completely transformed. Completely made new. Given a full fresh start.

[10 : 07] Given lots of love. Given a relationship with Father God. Because life transformation. Whole life transformation.

Physically. Mentally. Spiritually. Body, mind and soul. Is the good news of Jesus.

And just one example of millions. Is this guy here in verse 18. Brought to Jesus.

On a stretcher. He's paralyzed. He can't walk. Body broken. Can't work.

No income. In effect. No physical life. Most likely. Extremely weary.

[11 : 08] Mentally burdened. From endless years of isolation. Boredom. And being mistreated. Depressed. Very poor.

Mental health. Where is he with regards to faith and our religion. We don't know for sure. I think he may have been seeking God.

Mulling spiritual stuff in his mind. And I'll explain why later. But here at this point. He still doesn't know God.

He is still on forgiving. And so. A broken spiritual life. A broken spiritual life. A broken spiritual life. A spiritual life.

he is physically, mentally and spiritually broken. Probably the only good thing in his entire life is his four friends. And thank the Lord for these four guys, for they are the sort of friends anyone would want. We don't know if this guy was born this way, and these four grew up in his neighbourhood and just stayed close. Or maybe at one point, years ago he worked with them, tilled the land, or built houses and had an accident, leaving him paralysed and leaving them desperate to see him well again. We don't know. But in a day and an age when benefits and social help was neither here nor there, as I say, thank the Lord for them. I think it's very safe to assume the four friends have heard the constant stories of Jesus, his healing power, his inspiring stories, his radical teachings. And on this day, Jesus has come closer than any other day.

[13:44] They're out at their work for the day, but news is spreading. Jesus, Jesus, he's just over there. He's a number nine. He's local. He's teaching. He's preaching. He's healing.

And all the locals. All the people. Whether they're living there, socialising there, or working nearby, on hearing the news, off they go.

They're all there. They're all there. And more are coming. The house is jammed, packed. It says people have come from every town in Jerusalem, Judea, Galilee.

So the house is packed. Now the garden is crammed, the whole street, the surrounding roads, the fields, the entire village.

So when these four guys finally get over the shock, the world's most famous, i.e. the one they have heard all these stories about, when they get over the shock, he is actually in their village. It's a little too late.

[15:04] The place is crammed. Or is it? There's no way in now. Maybe next time. No.

They love their friend. And because they love him, the idea of him not knowing Jesus is dire.

And can I ask, do we, do you, do I, share that same adoration for Jesus, for the one who saved us?

Do we, like the four here, find it absolutely dire to think of others without Jesus?

Because if you do, and I know you will say you do, but if you really, really, really do, then pay very, very close attention to what happens next.

[16:10] They know only Jesus can help their friend. So a decision is made. No matter what, he gets to Jesus.

So they stretch him up. Each taking a corner, and walk, and walk, midday sun beating, and they approach the crowds.

Wiggles through the first half, I imagine, and then it halts, a brick wall of people. And one, excuse me, can we just squeeze past?

There's a guy in a stretcher here, you know. I've got my boy here. He's got a broken arm. I don't want to lose my place in this queue. And then, well, I'm next, and I'm next, and I'm next.

I've been ill for years. I'm waiting. And so on, and so on. It's a massive queue of people waiting to take their illnesses to Jesus.

[17:14] In other words, no way in. You may as well go home. Give up. You're never getting to Jesus. Far too late. No.

The decision was made. We firmly believe Jesus is the answer. We must get through. And so they push, and they prod, and maneuver, and bend.

And I expect this guy has never moved so much. But like a first century roller coaster, they're moving him in and out of every bend to get closer and closer to that house.

Finally, they can look through the gaps and spot the windows of the house. I think I see him one says.

Yeah. Brick wall of people. You're not coming in. There's just no room. Another barrier. Guys, situation unacceptable. For to think of our friend going another day without Jesus is awful.

[18:25] He must get. Mother what? So what next? And one raises his eyes to the roof, and four minds start buzzing.

These four guys start going round the back, and there's four guys start making a plan. You hold that. You grab that. I'll stand here. And off on a stretcher, now being tilted 270 degrees, he's just shouting, you know what, guys?

Maybe we should. Just until next time. Today is the day, one says. But you're going to drop me here. Don't worry. One will be okay. We'll get you sorted. And so they're up on the roof, removed.

And there, there is Jesus. They're up there, and he's down there. So exciting.

To their friend on a stretcher. Slide him towards Jesus. And this, I mean everything changes. For Jesus says in verse 20, friends, things are forgiven.

[19:39] Bang. Explosion. And then verse 21. The Pharisees and teachers of the law tells, who is this?

Who is this? Throughout Luke's gospel, lots and lots and lots of questions appear.

But none. Who is Jesus? And 2,000 years lessened the importance of this question.

It still remains the most important question. You know why? Because, okay, another very famous extract from another of Jesus' teaching.

comes up in John. And you guys know this very well. Jesus begins by saying in verse 1, Do not let your hearts be troubled, you believers.

[20 : 55] My father's house has many rooms. If that were not so, would I have told you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you may already know the way to the place where I am going.

And then Thomas asks his famous question, Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we... I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except me.

Jesus is the way. Jesus is the way. I am the truth and I am the life.

In Scotland, in our nice Christian setting, we're so familiar with these words. They are in souls and should be. And in reality, even for those in our land who have no...

but are still aware of Jesus as a religious figure, it is still rather common to hear them off as, yeah, that's all that church thing, that Jesus thing.

[22 : 00] Don't really understand it, but good teaching, I say. By concluding, Jesus was a good guy and taught good stuff. What? Did you actually...

Think about it. Jesus has just claimed to be God, the creator of the entire universe.

He has just claimed to be the one set rightful source of truth. The only one who can enable... Folks, that's not simply something we define as good.

He's telling everyone he's the Lord, God, almighty, creator of heaven and earth. Again, I have to stress, simply define as good. If you have been summarizing good teacher, then you need to rethink.

Because can you imagine how you would react hearing suffer this time today? In fact, C.S. Lewis, the guy who wrote, he famously says it like this, a man who merely wasn't the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher.

[23 : 21] on the level with a man who claims to be a poached egg or he would be the devil of hell. You must make your and is the son of God or else he's a madman or something worse.

You can shut it at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But come with any patronizing nonsense about this being a great shaming teacher because he's an option open to us.

In other words, to cast Jesus off as another ordinary good guy or teacher does not go about claiming to be God, claiming to be the way, claiming to be the truth and the life.

Summarizes his quote up by saying Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic or the Lord himself. We continue to explore verse 21's question, who is this?

If he was a liar, if Jesus was a liar, all the night and come to nothing around two thousand years ago, about five years after the crucifixion, in and around AD 31 to 33, suggest a good, well, thought through deception needs the main follower to feed the deception.

[24 : 56] And should they, the main follower, die, their deception would fizzle out for major reasons, such as the followers losing enthusiasm, etc. So, at well, of course, Jesus' followers were also being killed and imprisoned for keeping the message.

after a few years of prison and murders over a lie, it would have been enough to turn one. So, for me, the fact that we are two, five, and twenty nine years after the cross, the single biggest movement on the earth, is enough to convince me, well, he wasn't a liar then.

Now, second one, Jesus spent three and a half years teaching these the cross. And let me ask, how long does our society, listen to the words of a ludicrous side, some of our current politicians, how long would a ludicrous public teacher last?

A year? No, even. If you read history, you will know many mad people have come and went. If Jesus had been one of them, he would not have been listened to for over three years.

It's a Roman time when the first kind of mental asylum were being established. If Jesus had been banished and feared long ago, with Rome chaining Jesus up amongst the others.

[26 : 27] This is very important instead. As the first century proceeded, Roman governors wanted to hear him. The great intellectuals of the Greeks held his teachings in high authority and eventually, in the year 313, with the edit of Milan, Empire Constantine himself becomes a Christian and eventually, no later, Empire Siudasis makes Christianity the Roman Empire's state religion.

To have persevered and endured through all that. last, but certainly not least, Lord, as we've already said, ordinary good teachers seem to be God, claiming to be the way, the truth, and the life. So the option, and so if he didn't lie and he wasn't mad, the only other realistic and genuine is he is the Lord.

he is God himself. And when we're as our only option, everything changes. Everything. Because to not accept it, then see, make a real life decision to say no to God, to say no to his friendship, no to his love, no to his heaven.

And having said no, let themselves open to hell instead. The only realistic conclusion, if his teachings lasted, the Roman Empire and beyond, if his church remains the same, if the millions of countless of real life stories of people changed by him remain as much as they do, and he definitely is the way, the truth, and the life.

[28 : 27] on that busy, packed day, who is this? Needn't be asked. We have just done, if you give this question a proper, intellectual, historic breakdown, the answer is clear.

He is God, he is Jesus, and he is the good. If like millions of others all over the globe, you have firmly landed at a firm defeat of God, and if you're here today because of your faith, because you're part of God's family, then the question has to be, what should we do now?

Well, like the four friends voted to get others to Jesus, like the four friends, make every effort, make no excuse. Don't be lazy, intimidated.

Like the four friends, let nothing absolutely your way. Just look at them within the picture, these valiant soldiers. Nothing was climbed over, every wall knocked down, every storm pushed through, every attack fought.

People are walls of brick, old guards saying get back, are the enemy dispiriting their own weary or anything else. every single level was overcome, all to Jesus.

[29 : 56] And there's the answer. One, who exactly is this? Who? What should we do? Our answer, be like the four friends. It is not enough to simply say, I have known Christian friends.

I live like Jesus around them. Who will be held by account to Jesus for your witness to them. And I trust you will be able, these four guys, what they could say to Jesus.

But whether we have friends of faith or know, it gets much bigger, much, much bigger. Your neighbours, work colleagues, the people around us.

This new chapter of Westerhills Baptist Church will not be limited to Westerhills live elsewhere. We therefore expect you to witness there also live.

God has called you here to this fellowship. So that by being part of this fellowship in the business of bringing people to Jesus wherever you live. Take that encouragement from verse 20.

[31 : 05] When Jesus saw the friends' faith, he said, your sins are forgiven. Jesus for their faith-filled work to the fifth friend.

Can he do the same for you? It is our one sole desire to bring people together. Because look at what happens.

Look at the outcome. It's so we started with all this this morning. Transformation. Verse 25, the guy stood up but fully transformed physically, yep, on his feet, walking and jumping, never been in a fitter mind, happy as Larry, singing to God, and spiritually, yep.

See, I reckon, if anything, when back in that desperate state, if there was God, quiet cries for God, quiet, tear-filled prayers, and God answered those prayers, by bringing four faith-filled friends to take him to Jesus.

Immediately forgive him because he had already asked for it in prayer. Sentently, spiritually transformed, whole life transformation, and that, that is what happens, Jesus Christ, our amazing, phenomenal, incredible Jesus.

[32 : 35] And just this guy's transformation, verse 26 says, everyone, everyone to God. The whole time, the whole of Wester Hills, it was a breakthrough for the kingdom.

To Jesus and showing people the transformative power of Jesus in our fun days and holiday clubs, to breakthrough the area being overtaken for the kingdom.

Everyone praising God just like verse 26 breaks through. If you've been following the same Jesus declared a picture of freedom, recovery, salvation, transformation with him.

This week in chapter 5, he makes that picture a reality. He literally lives out his vision. He goes into the towns and sets the broken, busted, oppressed people free.

I fully truncated, I say it again, physically, mentally, and spiritually. I.e., he connects them to the God of creation and enables them to come to heaven.

[33 : 47] For as he himself put it in verse, he's not the healthy who knew the doctor but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance.

And he can only do so because he will the way, the truth and the life. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, the world always struggled and argued and debated and immed and ammed around us. And that alone, Jesus, serves to convince us that it never will. and so thank you for helping us break this down.

Thank you for planting these words that we can use them to learn from on works right. And I pray, Lord, to claim you as Lord that they would do so today.

And I pray, Lord, that we, as your disciples here, will take the heart folk, that like the four friends, we will be driven with enthusiasm, conviction, and the ones that we know discovering you in a relationship with you, connected to you.

[35 : 09] So yes, we ask that you send us into this week to live according to the kingdom. In the name of Jesus, Amen. One final song, thank you John, in Christ alone, to the week ahead and thank you.

Christ is found, he is my light, my strength, my song, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest strut, lives of love, what depths of peace, where fears of cities, my comforter, my all in all, here in the love of Christ, I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless faith, this gift of love and righteousness, scarred by the ones he came to save, till on the cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied, for every sin on him was laid, here in the death of Christ, I live.

There in the ground his body lay, lines of the world by darkness slain, then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave he rose again, and as he stands in victory, sin's curse has lost, its grip on me, for I am his, and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

no guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me, from life's first cry to final breath, death, Jesus demands my destiny, no power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from his hand, till he returns, or calls me home, here in the power of Christ, and the power of Christ.

[38 : 46] Amen. Do join us this evening at 6pm for evening devotions and fellowship and to hold us in prayer on Wednesday evening over IGM.

And where we started with our opening psalm of praise, the Lord is gracious and compassionate to you. He is slow to anger to you, rich in love to you.

The Lord is good to all of us. He has compassion on us because he made us. So may we all go in the love, gentleness, and loving arms of the Father.

In Jesus' name, Amen.