

"Who Do You Say I Am?" (Matthew 16:13-28)

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[0 : 0 0] So Matthew chapter 16, verse 13, to the end of the chapter. All right. When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do people say the Son of Man is?

They replied, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But what about you, he asked.

Who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered, you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus replied, blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

[1 : 2 3] Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Never, Lord, he said. This shall never happen to you. Jesus turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan.

You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns. Then Jesus said to his disciples, Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul?

Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. That is the word of God. Good afternoon, everyone.

[2 : 2 8] Thank you, Venus, for reading that. And so keep your Bibles open. This is a wonderful passage, a very challenging passage, and we need God's help as we hear God speak to us today.

Would you pray with me? Father God, we confess that you are the Christ. Your Son is the Christ.

Jesus, the Messiah. So help us, as we hear these challenging words, to respond accordingly. If Jesus is King, that our whole lives would reflect him, would be in service of him.

If he dies and rises again, that we would die to ourselves, and be born again in him. I pray this for everyone who is listening in, whether here or online, whether now or in future.

Thank you. We pray all these things. We ask that your Holy Spirit would empower us as we hear these God-breathed words. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

[3 : 34] Amen. It's a new school year for many of you, so I hope you survived your class photos, all kinds of things. Yeah, back to school, hey?

And this is a wonderful time, isn't it? Each year, thousands of students actually come, not just from around Auckland, but actually from overseas. I had a chat with Bernice, and her cousin has just come from overseas to start school at Botany, and I'm sure you know are people who have families who have just started school.

Studying in New Zealand, many of them come from different countries, Hong Kong, China, elsewhere. And there's a phenomenon, isn't there? While they're here, maybe for a couple of years, maybe more, many of them will encounter Christianity, hear about Jesus, hear the gospel for the first time.

And some of them will even attend a church like ours. Perhaps some of them will get more and more involved in the life of the church. They will encounter Jesus. Perhaps some of them will pray a prayer, a confession, and belief in Jesus.

Perhaps some of them will join the church, get involved, and then maybe some of them will go back, or they'll move away from Auckland. They'll go through a different life stage. What happens?

[4 : 56] Well, for example, a Christian organization, Thriving Turtles, they estimate that actually 50 to 80 percent of people who become Christians overseas, studying overseas in the West, will actually leave their faith within a year of going back to China, for example.

You want to think about that for a moment? Think about that for a moment. If you submit an assessment and you get a less than 50 percent grade, how do you feel? Or if you work for a company and you build 11 apartments and only three of them have sold so far and the rest, you know, they're a bit empty or they're not doing so well.

True story. That's across the road from us. Or let's say we baptize, you know, a bunch of people. Not just us. The churches in Auckland, New Zealand baptize all kinds of people.

But then, years later, only some of them are still following Jesus. How would you feel if that was the success rate of our gospel preaching, of our Christianity?

Maybe let's ask the question, why is this happening? Why is the church, the church in general, not just us, but the church, why are we so bad at making disciples of Jesus, lifelong followers of Jesus?

[6 : 20] I think behind this spectacular failure is a serious problem in the church today, especially in the West. We have built in the church an unhealthy, even perhaps false picture of who Jesus is and what it looks like to follow Him.

And I don't know, perhaps in our church there can be a deep misunderstanding among some about two questions. Who is Jesus and what does it mean to follow Him?

Thankfully, these are precisely the two questions that our passage today addresses, is it not? Right? Wonderfully read. This is our final installment of Action Jesus, as it were.

This summer, we have been following His footsteps. And as Matthew, the author of this gospel account, has been writing, he's taken us into all kinds of places, right?

The halls of King Herod. He's taken us to the miracles on the mountainside. He's taken us to those steps of faith in the storm from Peter, from the Lord Himself.

[7 : 30] Again and again, we see all kinds of miracles. The nations praising the God of Israel. Matthew is our journalist friend. He is repeating and reporting the events, the discussions that paint a picture of Jesus' power and His authority.

And he's noting time and time again how Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God's promises, right? Promises from the oldest books of the Bible for a better prophet, a better priest, a better king.

And here in our passage, though, this is the climax of our series. Here in our passage, we find the biggest moment yet. We have the big reveal, as it were, of who Jesus is and what does it look like to follow Him.

So we're going to keep it simple, right? Those are our two main points of today's sermon. Who is Jesus and what does it look like to follow Him? Let's address that first question. Who is Jesus? It's our first question today.

And actually, it's not my question, first of all. It's actually the Lord's question. You notice that in the passage, don't you, right? Have a look at verse 13 again in your Bibles. Have a read.

[8 : 43] When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea, Philippi, He asked His disciples, who do people say the Son of Man is? They reply, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

But what about you? He asked. Who do you say I am? Remember that the author of this gospel, Matthew, he's actually in the crowd of disciples right there and then, is he not?

He's one of the disciples that were first following Jesus, right? This is a first-hand account of a very important conversation. And he records this as they are walking in an area called Caesarea Philippi.

Okay. Caesar, who knows? Caesar, who's done classics. This is king country. This is kingdom territory. All right? It's named after the Roman emperor of the time.

They are in his own patch. And their presence in the Roman king's territory, his domain, sparks this discussion about God's promised king.

[9 : 47] Who is this king? Now, when we read in our Bibles in English, the Son of Man may just seem like a throwaway line. Okay? Perhaps an odd title, right?

Who do people say the Son of Man is? I don't know. There are lots of Sons of Man around here. But you'll notice that Jesus repeats this phrase, Son of Man, three times in our passage.

Okay, here and then verse 27, verse 28. This is a phrase, actually, that is straight out of the Old Testament prophecies, particularly in the book of Daniel.

Any one of you here ever had a bad dream or a nightmare? Yeah? So a few nods. Okay. Maybe some recent ones. I'm not sure. Spare a thought for poor Daniel's dreams.

He was someone who struggled with visions in the night. And one of them was recorded in the Bible. And this is what he once said. Daniel 7, 13. He once saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man.

[10 : 50] And he came to the ancient of days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away. and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Daniel's scary dream preserves a very important picture of a powerful person called the son of man, one like a son of man. And over the centuries, this idea of the son of man becomes a way to describe what Matthew's readers and listeners would have hoped for in the first century.

These were a bunch of Jewish people under Roman occupation. Imagine that if our country was ruled by a foreign power hoping for deliverance from one like a son of man.

A king given all authority and glory. A king served by all peoples, nations, and languages. A king with an everlasting dominion. Who is this king going to be?

[12 : 03] And here in king country, the disciples start to talk and share some theories after Jesus' question. They replied, verse 14, some say John the Baptist, but he's dead.

We realized this earlier. Others say Elijah, Jeremiah. Well, they're prophets but they're gone too. Who is it then? This is where Jesus then asks a more pointed and direct question.

Look at verse 15. But what about you? He asks. Who do you say I am? Just as the audience gasps when you're watching, I don't know, one of the Batman movies and Bruce Wayne is revealed to be none other than Batman.

Just as you as a reader are just shocked when you discover in book six of Harry Potter who the half-blood prince is. No spoilers. The big reveal in our story here, it's a mic drop moment, isn't it?

Because Peter, what does he say? You, Jesus. You are the Messiah, the Christ. You are the Son of the living God.

[13 : 13] He's using that same language, the Son of the living God. Here, Peter has, for the first time in Matthew's Gospel, he has connected both the hope for a son of man, like in Daniel, and the Christ or the promised one from other promises in the Old Testament.

This is Jesus unmasked. This is the first time Jesus is clearly identified for who he truly is. You know, earlier in Matthew's Gospel, there are lots of wow moments, weren't there, in Matthew's Gospel, right?

Earlier in chapter 8, the disciples, they marvel at Jesus' authority when he can calm the wind and the storm and the waves, right? They say, what kind of person is this, that even the wind and the waves obey him?

Matthew chapter 8, verse 27. And we've already heard in Matthew 14, when the Son of Man walks on water, when he saves Peter, those in the boat, they worshipped him.

They said, truly the Son of God is what you are. They see him as some divine representative of God. And yet now here, in Caesarea Philippi, Peter gets it right.

[14 : 25] You're not just a representative of God. You are the Christ. You are the promised King. You are the Son of Man. You are the living God himself. Who is Jesus?

He is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, as he has claimed to be. There are lots of views about who Jesus is. Perhaps you share some of them. Perhaps your friends and colleagues share some of them.

But you cannot overlay Jesus, right, what you see here over your own beliefs. There's no permission granted here to add Jesus to just your collection of things that keep you safe.

Jesus is King. He claims himself to be King. He claims himself to have no rivals at all. Is that who Jesus is to you? King without rival.

It's not always so clear in our lives, is it? But listening to some testimonies, some stories of people who became Christians but then struggled to follow Jesus in the long term.

[15 : 32] Their names have changed but these are true stories, right? So meet Kai Wen or Calvin. He's a high school student. He's just moved from overseas and he stays with his homestay.

We'll call him Mr. and Mrs. Lee. They're so lovely, right? Room and board. Look after him so well. And so this is what he says about them. Mr. and Mrs. Lee, they're just like my own parents back home.

They pick me up. They take me to church on Sunday. They feed me heaps. They encourage me when I feel homesick and miss my family. I love Mr. and Mrs. Lee. They invite me too to attend a Bible study on Friday night and we have been reading the Bible together.

They're so kind to me. I'm so fond of them. And then recently, Mr. and Mrs. Lee, they really wanted me to say a special prayer with them about accepting Jesus as my God. And I don't really understand it, but it seems so important to them.

And they've been so kind to me. So I said the prayer and it made them so happy. Mrs. Lee even started to cry. I'm glad I can make them happy.

[16 : 38] Who is Jesus to Kai Wen? He's not the son of the living God, is he? He's not the Christ. He's just someone that Kai Wen intellectually accepts to make his host family happy.

He doesn't want them to lose face or offend him, so he goes along with it. Or meet Tanya. This is a quote from what she's said before in her testimony.

My family used to take me to visit different temples from overseas. Sorry, this is just a random picture. Sorry. I'm not so good with them photos. My family used to take me to visit different temples, say prayers, and make offerings to the different gods.

Because you never know which one might be able to help you. Since I'm studying in a Western country now, I decided to go to church and learn about Jesus. He seems to be the Christian, the Westerners God.

He sounds very interesting, seems to be quite powerful. I'm going to learn how to worship him at the church so I can call on him when I have a problem too. Because I want to cover all my bases.

[17 : 49] Who is Jesus to Tanya? Again, not the Christ, not the king without rivals. It's just a new lucky charm on her bracelet, as it were. Church, it is so easy for us to present Jesus wrong, is it not?

It's so tempting to make it easy to become a follower of Jesus. Look, Jesus has influence, but he's not just an influencer.

He's more than that. He is a miracle worker, but he's not just that. Yes, he's wise, but he's not just a wise person. Who are you, Jesus?

This is the right answer here. You, you are the Christ, God's chosen king. He is ruler over everyone and everything. That's the Bible's answer.

Do you believe this? Do you tell others this? I think if we're honest, some of our gospel presentations might fall far short of this. Perhaps we present Jesus as a fixer-upper in your life.

[18 : 52] Or like a genie, he'll grant you multiple wishes. Or we treat him like he's our barista. What would you like? Double shot? Sure.

Or we talk about him as if he's this distant figment, but he got us out of jail once. Right? He's our righteousness, but that happened a long time ago. No.

The Bible says he is the Christ, the son of the living God. This is the right answer. And this is the answer Jesus himself honors.

Do you notice that in our passage? Jesus, how does he reply in verse 17? He looks to Peter, who's just made this confession, and he says, blessed are you.

Right? He doesn't just say, kapai, you know, good on you. He says, blessed are you. He doesn't just say, okay, that's fine. He says, blessed.

[19 : 50] You are blessed. Now, the word blessed here in the original language is not just kind of that hashtag that we add beside our wedding photos or our holiday snaps.

This is actually the exact same word that Jesus used back in chapter 5 on the Sermon on the Mount as he opens up his biggest speech. Right?

Matthew, remember, he loves to repeat things. We heard that from Pastor Michael last week. Here he's repeating this word again because it matters. Here we want to read Peter's answer as part of the blessed or the flourishing life of someone who follows Jesus.

We want to read those Beatitudes in Matthew 5 into this reply. Okay? So, this is encompassing more than just Peter saying something true and factual.

This is Peter admitting to Jesus that he is poor in spirit, that he would mourn without Jesus, that he would hunger and thirst for righteousness, all the Beatitudes and so on.

[20 : 53] Everything that Jesus has put on that sermon on the Mount. And this is all truths, this is all attitudes about Jesus that every disciple can have through the Holy Spirit, through faith in Christ as our Messiah, our promised one.

And, you know, on this confession, on this belief about Jesus, Jesus will build his church. Right?

On this rock, okay, not Peter himself, but what he's just declared about Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus will build his church on this confession.

It will be a church that no deathly power can overthrow and wipe out. It will be a church that, a kingdom that no human government can squash and get rid of. If the rock is Peter's declaration, what he's just said, the keys to this kingdom will be sharing, preaching this good news about who Jesus is.

Jesus, you are the Christ, God's chosen king. We want to get this straight. In this exchange, Peter has not just leveled up to become the Pope, not quite.

[22 : 11] Peter here has become the rock of the early church, not because of some special power he has, some special title or office, because, you know what, despite his faults, which one of them will see in this passage in a moment, Peter will faithfully go on to tell people exactly what he's declared here.

He will declare to people that Jesus is the Christ, the promised one. He will do it before thousands. He will do it at great cost, at great risk, to his own well-being. If you read the book of Acts, we went through it last year, Acts chapter 3, Acts chapter 4, he will make big speeches and he will tell Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And salvation is found in no other name but the name of Jesus. That confession is the rock that our church, the church in general, is built on.

And that is the key to the kingdom of heaven, sharing this good news, nothing else. And actually in Acts 10, Peter becomes a key himself.

He becomes someone who actually unlocks the way for people like Cornelius, not Jewish, to accept the gospel, to become welcome into God's kingdom.

[23 : 33] You and I benefit because God has worked through people like Peter, giving them clarity of who Jesus is and empowering them to share this great news with others.

That's the key to the kingdom of heaven. And at that, later on in a meeting in Acts chapter 15, Peter and some of the first apostles, they will end up making key decisions that kind of bind and loose the church.

Basically, in Acts 15, they will say that Jesus is for everyone, not just Jewish people, but for everyone. There, they open the gates, as it were, to everyone who calls on Jesus' name as the unrivaled king to be part of God's church.

And now, while in verse 20, Jesus warns them, warns his disciples, don't spill the beans about who I am just yet. He actually has to make it to Jerusalem. Remember, they're up quite far north.

He has to make it there safely to make his big announcement. It's after this big reveal that actually everything changes in Matthew's gospel. Jesus' teaching actually starts to change significantly.

[24 : 48] We've heard what the answer to the question, who is Jesus? And from verse 21 onwards, we hear, what does it mean to follow him? Listen to verse 21 again.

From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem. He must suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law. And he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life again.

For the first time in Matthew's gospel, Jesus places before his listeners a shocking truth. that God's chosen king is going to go to the king's seat in Jerusalem and he's going to suffer and die, be killed.

He's not going to march in and conquer Jerusalem and establish an earthly kingdom. He's going to ride in, yes, but on a donkey, humble. He's going to come in and then he's going to hang on a cross and die for sinners.

The son of man, right, with all the promises in the Old Testament, he comes not to be served, he's going to come to serve and to give his life.

[26 : 05] To give his life is a ransom for many. If you were a first century Jew just hearing that, this would have been unbelievable. I know we have the benefit of 2,000 years of Christianity, but at this point in time, people had no category for a suffering chosen king.

We need to understand this. They would not have been able to read Isaiah 53 and see that it would be literally fulfilled in the same son of man in Daniel 7's vision.

They would not have been able to put the two together. It took Jesus entering the scene to be the first to show them to declare this fact. And you know what?

I think these disciples, they were so focused on Jesus being like, I don't know, the ultimate superhero for them. The ultimate action warrior.

That to hear him plan out his defeat, that would have been unthinkable. What kind of victory speech is this? I'm going to go in and give up my life?

[27 : 14] Yet without understanding that Jesus came to suffer and die, without understanding that this is part of his mission, we will have a wrong view of what it looks like to follow Jesus.

Consider Gina's story, for example. She's been lonely her whole life. Her biological family don't understand or accept her. But recently, she's started coming to church.

She's started to hear about Jesus. That's good, isn't it? Sounds like an amazing God. If Jesus can do miracles, maybe he can make my problems go away when I pray to him.

For Gina, Jesus is going to make her life better and better and better. Unfortunately, though, this is a Jesus that's not quite from the Bible, not quite from these pages, not complete, right?

Her version of Jesus is a handyman, Mr. Fix-It. Not the Christ, the living God, not the one who suffers and is killed. Gina, unfortunately, wants Jesus to serve her, do what she wants when she wants it.

[28 : 22] She's not yet willing to follow Jesus and suffer for his name. And I think Peter and Gina would relate. So Peter, the apostle, what does he say? Verse 22, he takes Jesus aside and begins to rebuke him.

It's interesting, isn't it? The star of the story who made the first true Christian confession just blurts out a big mistake. You know this is not made up because these are people who are recorded warts and all.

You know this is accurate because this is not something that you would want to preserve for generation after generation and that this is Peter. He sounds grumpy, actually, in most of our English translations, doesn't he?

Literally, his rebuke in the original language reads, May God be gracious to you, Lord. This will never happen. Nice thought to say.

Sure. But even a faithful follower like Peter can mess up. Can have a wrong understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. What his mission is.

[29 : 29] And so Jesus calls it out. He sees the spirit of temptation in Peter's remarks and he tells him, literally, Satan, get behind me. Look, at a human level, Peter is right.

He's so in touch with the spirit of our age, right? We want to avoid pain and suffering at all costs. We agree with Peter, part of us. Surely not, Jesus. Surely things are going to get better and better from here.

You've just declared you're the king. Surely things are going to get better. But, look at this carefully, church. Notice that avoiding pain and suffering is not part of Jesus' mission.

He's not an earthly kingdom builder. He's not someone that will wipe away all your worries and delete them. Rather, his mission and following after his mission will involve immense suffering.

After all, he will die for your sins and mine. That's a lot of suffering there. I think Jesus is so fierce here to Peter and it's recorded down here for us because he wants all of us to hear this and be in no doubt.

[30 : 39] If you get Jesus' mission wrong, we get the most important thing wrong. It is at the cross that we see what is most central about Christianity.

It is at the cross we see what it truly means to be a follower of Jesus. It is when we see Christ atoning death for our sins that we understand what it means to be a Christian.

You want to understand this? There are lots of things we can have different debates and discussions about. How old the world was, right? What kind of spiritual gifts you and I have?

But on this point, what did Christ do on the cross? What is his mission? There should be no error tolerated. If you and I differ about how to run a church, how to evangelize, well, that's fine.

We'll still see each other in the new heavens and earth. An error on these points is, like one author said, it's just a skin disease. That's fine. But if you and I are wrong about Jesus' death, it is a faithful error.

[31 : 53] PCBC, what you and I must find our greatest hope in is that Christ has died for us. And again, I think some of our gospel presentations, unfortunately, they tend to fall far short of this.

Think of Sam. Sam, back in his hometown, he had a whole tribe around him. His parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Sam had classmates and neighbors and, you know, he just lived in this space where everyone looked out for each other.

Sam was never lonely. When he needed help, there was always someone nearby. But then, Sam moved overseas. And in this new place, he didn't know anyone.

He felt so lost and lonely. In this country, people were so individualistic. Sounds like our country. When some Christians then said, come to church and find some friends, Sam just lapped it up.

He'd come every week. At this church, he was saying, oh, people, there's people. I have a community again. There's people who are kind and caring. I want to be a part of this because I need to have people who will care for me.

[33 : 07] Can you see that Sam has not yet started to follow Jesus? He's looking for something. But he hasn't realized who Jesus is yet. He just wants to be a part of a big, happy group again like he once was.

And so we want to be careful, church. Brothers and sisters, come to church and find a community is not the gospel. Come to Christ and you'll be loved on and entertained and fed and your kids will be looked after.

They'll grow up right. Come to church and you'll find a good job, a good spouse, a good house. None of these is what it means to follow Jesus. And look, we may not say it out loud, but sometimes, can we just confess it?

Sometimes we feel like this is what church is about, doesn't it? Sometimes this is how we live and speak about our faith, where our dreams and hopes go to. But what is the call of the gospel then?

What does it mean to follow Jesus? Our passage actually tells us, right? Jesus tells us, verse 24, if anyone will come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.

[34 : 28] He must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. Whoever wants to save his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life in me will find it. What good it will be for someone?

If he gains the whole world yet forfeits his soul. Can you hear this message? Can you see what it means to follow Jesus? In contrast, there is a terrible message that comes from the lips and lies of many people in church.

And it kind of, just sum it up, it might sound like this, if anyone will come after me, Jesus, let them indulge themselves. Let them take a selfie about it. Let them just say, I've been baptized, that's okay.

No. Jesus says it here plainly. To follow Jesus means to submit to him as Lord and Savior. To deny yourself. To publicly declare your death to this world.

Take up your cross. Drag your hangman's noose. Sit on the electric chair and show the world. And follow the king wherever he goes. To death and into new life again.

[35 : 38] Jesus says here plainly, to follow Jesus may mean losing your life and faithfulness to the king of kings. Jesus is telling something that's so different to many of the false pictures that we paint that is sometimes preached even.

All right? What is life's purpose? It's often preached, it's all about discovering the best in you. But Jesus says, follow me, lose your life for my sake and find life in me.

Come to Jesus. Deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow him. That is the true call of the gospel. Die to your old life. That's repentance.

And by faith, trust that in Jesus, your new life in him is far, far better. I know that many of you know this. You have lived this out through some of the hardest times.

Praise God for that. Jesus has carried you through some of the hardest things you've never thought you had to face. Praise the Lord. And yet my fear is that some of you here or listening online, you may have never considered this.

[36 : 52] Maybe following Jesus is your upward trajectory in life. Verse 24 is clear though, right? This is a very biblical summary of what it means to follow Jesus.

You'll join him in his sufferings, but you'll join him in new life. Praise the Lord. One follows the other as sure as spring follows winter.

What profit is it if you believe the other thing? Right? I'll have my best life now. I'll inherit everything and then just lose everything afterwards.

Listen to how Matthew closes this chapter in our series, right? It's so plain. There is a final judgment coming. We can argue back and forth all about what hell's like, who's going to be there, is it fair?

Listen to Jesus' lips, his words. The Son of Man will appear again in his glory. And if your righteousness is not found in him and his kingdom, after he tests your deeds, your eternal future will be found where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, a hell of your own making, eternal suffering of your own choice.

[38 : 04] And if this is true, then, church, two things. Firstly, let us not be false advertisers. Our message to the dying world out there is, Jesus is king.

Come and die to yourself to truly live in him. No other message will do for King Jesus. This is a message, it may not fill stadiums everywhere, but it will be thoroughly what God wants us to say.

And it will satisfy true, searching souls forever. And secondly, if this is truly who Jesus is, and what it looks like to follow him, let us not be aimless wanderers.

Let us not be aimless wanderers. The two most important days on your calendar and my calendar is not that next holiday, it's not that next wedding or that next event on the calendar.

There should only be two important days on your calendar, today and that day when he returns. Today and that day. When the Son of Man comes in his kingdom, will you be found in him?

[39 : 16] If so, what is the direction you will take in your life today? Where will you travel and where will your decisions go to match your confession that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God?

After all we have seen from action, Jesus, can I plead with you? Can I encourage you not to just marvel at Jesus from a distance? He will not want that.

Not to just mock him from afar. He will judge that. Give up your old life. Come and follow him. Go where his nail-pierced hands take you.

There's a cost. You'll lose yourself. But you find something, someone far greater. You can start today. You can start again today as well.

Let's pray. I'm going to invite the musicians to come and I'm going to transition straight into the Lord's table.

[40 : 21] So if you're helping out with that as well, I'm pleased to come up and help with that. But let's pray. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, you know my heart.

You know how even in preparing this message, how hard it has been to die to myself and to follow you. So forgive me and forgive us, Lord, for all our wasted dreams, our futile chasing.

Take us back to the heart of our faith, the cross, the cross that you suffered on, where you took on the punishment for all our sins.

We thank you for the Lord's table that is a small picture of what you have done for us. There is no greater truth than to celebrate and to live out the fact that Christ died for our sins.

So we thank you, Lord. Help us now as we remember the Lord's table together as a church family. Help us to celebrate the fact that you are King of kings and following you as worth it all.

[41 : 45] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.