

# The Reality of Christ's Humanity

By Don Green

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**Bible Verse:** 1 John 1:1-4  
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**Truth Community Church**  
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45255

**Website:** [truthcommunitychurch.org](http://truthcommunitychurch.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm](http://www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm)

Well, it's really wonderful to see everyone out. I'm always very encouraged by the Tuesday night turnout. I think it's marvelous that we have such a large percentage of our church that's committed to coming on a weekday evening, if I can put it like that, and you know, your love for God's word and your love for the fellowship with his people is always a great encouragement to me.

It's Christmas week, of course, leading up to next Tuesday, the day when we remember the birth of Christ, and I just think it's just so very important for us to take the time to remember that we can't view Bethlehem in isolation. There are so many currents of great context that run through the birth of our Lord that we need to really step back and think about it and remember it, remembering first of all, that this was part of God's eternal plan. God planned the birth, the Incarnation, the crucifixion, the resurrection of Christ even before the foundation of the world and this was the fulfillment of prophecy that had been made centuries earlier, and so you see in the birth of Christ an unfolding of the plan of God that is amazing. You go from the manger and you go forward through his life and you realize that the whole purpose of his life was that he would give that righteous, perfect, sinless life as a sacrifice for our sins; that his birth had a view toward Golgotha, had view toward Calvary from the beginning; that there was a plan that was unfolding throughout all of that; to realize that his birth is a reflection of the character of God toward us, his love, his grace, his patience, his kindness toward us, toward us unworthy sinners, toward us guilty in our sin and our guilt and our rebellion and all of the things that pollute and corrupt our existence. All of that, Christ came with a view of taking that away, taking it upon himself so that we might be forgiven and that we might go free. So as we sing about the midnight clear when Christ was born and when Christ came, we realize that we see the attributes of God on display, the perfections of God on display, we see an outworking of the plan of salvation from eternity past toward eternity future, we see in wondrous undeniable glory the fact that God sent his Son because he loved the world, because he loved sinners like us and designed and planned for us to be saved, to be rescued, to be reconciled to him despite our guilt, despite all the sorrow that life brings.

So truly it is, when we remember the birth of Christ and we remember who our Lord is, truly it is the most wonderful news that could come to weary ears and to realize that there is hope that transcends this life, that there is hope that transcends the present difficulties

that we experience, there is hope beyond the weary load that we carry from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, and that in the Gospel of Christ, in the coming of Christ, in the revelation of Christ, we have that which transcends the world, which transcends our guilt, which transcends the sorrows of this life and in Christ we have our all-in-all. That's a wonderful place for us to be and it's what we remember as we gather together, not just tonight but also on Sunday we'll be visiting this theme, but as we consider the context of the birth of Christ, what I want to do tonight is to put his birth into the context of the fullness of his humanity. The fullness of his humanity.

We consider tonight the reality of Christ's humanity and I invite you to turn to a passage we looked at many years ago in the book of 1 John. 1 John 1, beginning in verse 1, and it's important for us to remember, to keep in mind that the humanity of Christ was necessary for our salvation, and we'll see that unfolded both tonight and on Sunday as we kind of do a little two-part time of focusing on Christ, and I'm very glad and delighted that we can just lift up Christ tonight, focus on him, remember his love for us, and all of us be drawn closer to him as a result.

1 John 1, the first four verses say this,

1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

Now John opens up this letter reminding and instructing and telling his readers, and by extension telling us, that he is writing about things with which he has direct personal experience; that through the physical senses by which we all acquire knowledge and information and make judgments about reality, he says, "I have with my physical senses, I and the group of the apostles that preceded me of which I am the last remaining member, we, the apostolic circle, we saw Him. We heard Him with our own ears. We touched Him with our own hands and from the very beginning of the ministry of Christ, the public ministry of Christ," John says, "we were with Him." And that's just such an important reminder for us as we live in the midst of an age which is just increasingly hostile to Christian thought, to Christian people, to Christian ethics. It's just so important for us to remember that what we believe and what we proclaim are not old wives tales, they're not fables, they're not cleverly designed stories, designed to amuse or entertain people with. No, what we believe, what we know, what we rest our hope on are firmly grounded realities that occurred in time and space. Jesus Christ really did come from heaven to live on earth and that is verified by hundreds of contemporary witnesses who saw him, who heard him, and who even saw him in his resurrected state. 1 Corinthians 15 says there were over 500 witnesses at the time. These things were undeniable. These

things were verified by many and John goes immediately to that point as he opens his letter.

Now as he was writing, he was writing to defend his readers from a developing heresy known as Gnosticism, and what Gnostics believed, without getting too technical here, is very simple and you can see why the reality of Christ's humanity would be so important to John as he wrote. Gnostics believed that the material world was bad. The things that were tangible, the human flesh, all of that was evil; it was something that was to be avoided and it was the realm of the spirit that was holy and good. So they had this antithesis, they had this dichotomy that was grounded in bad theology and the implication of that for them was that Jesus Christ could not have been a real human being. Based on their prior presupposition that the material realm was morally bad, that meant that Christ could not possibly according to them, Christ could not possibly have been a man because that would mean that he had contact with evil humanity and, therefore, he was not a real human being, they said.

Well, how do you account for what people saw during the lifetime of Jesus, then? Well, what these teachers developed was a heresy that is known as Docetism and this is as technical as I'm going to get here tonight so just stay with me. Docetism teaches that Jesus only seemed to have a body. It's from the Greek verb, "dokeo, to seem; to appear." Docetism teaches that it only seemed like Jesus had a human body but he really didn't because if he did, he would have had contact with evil and that wasn't the case, and so this was just all a big charade, it was an illusion, it wasn't what it appeared to be and Jesus, therefore, used this illusion of appearing like a human being because he was a spiritual messenger who had come to enlighten them.

Now, you say, "That sounds kind of goofy," and you'd be right. It is kind of goofy. It has nothing to do with the truth. But there's a persuasion about that. It is the nature of the fallen human heart to love esoteric things, at least for some people, and to be drawn away into mystical spiritual realms where there's a secret knowledge to be had and all of that, and so Gnosticism appealed to that love for secret knowledge that men seem, it just seems to be endemic to the fallen human condition.

What John is doing here is he is taking a Spirit-inspired cannon to blow that whole realm of thought apart and he is giving a forceful defense of the real humanity of Christ and he says, "Look, this was no illusion. This was not a figment of our imaginations. I as part of the apostolic circle, we saw Him with our own eyes. We heard Him. We touched Him with our hands. Christ was no phantom. He was no figment of our imagination. Remember," speaking in the sense in which John is communicating here and using the first person to do that, John is saying, "Remember that we were with Him for a period of three years. If this had been a figment of our imagination, it would have become obvious, but there were 12 of us appointed disciples who were with Him for 36 months and we walked with Him and we saw Him and we had every opportunity to observe Him personally and up close. We did and He was real. The idea that He was some phantom and that this was only an illusion is totally false and I'm here as an apostle," John says,

"to set the matter straight." And that's what he does as he goes through the book of 1 John.

Now what we want to do tonight is to take a look at some of the Gospel passages that would verify the assertion that John makes about the reality of Christ's humanity and what this does is it gives us the fuller context of what we celebrate as we remember the birth of Christ; that his humanity as he was a babe in his mother's arm, led to a real human life that developed, that became an adult life, and that his death on the cross for men was real and that it was a genuine human life that was offered on the cross for our salvation.

Well, what can we find, quickly, as we go through Scripture together this evening that would verify that? What you're going to find is that there are multiple ways that we see this attested in Scripture and one of the things that I find really fascinating about this whole topic as you look at the humanity of Christ, is to recognize that the proof of it is forceful in the incidental, unassuming way in which human things are spoken about when it relates to Christ. So we see these things as we'll unfold them here as we go along.

What's the first aspect of the human life of Christ that we could say? 1. He had a human lifespan. He had a human lifespan. What I mean by that is that he was born, he lived and he died, and that's what we're talking about here. And how do we see this human lifespan? Well, first of all, we won't turn to these passages, not all the passages here this evening, but think about this, now I think this is amazing: in Matthew 1 and in Luke 3, you find records of the human ancestry of Christ. Luke, tracing through the line of Mary going back to Adam himself. Matthew, showing the royal lineage and ending with the supposed legal father of Jesus, not his human father, but ending in the line of Joseph. Matthew gives the legal line through Joseph, Luke gives the physical connection through Mary and all of this indicating that just like you and I have parents and grandparents and great-grandparents and going all the way back however far you want to trace it, it was the same for Jesus. His identity with our humanity was like that. His mother had a recorded genealogy that could be traced. His legal father, Joseph, had the same thing through a different line. This tells us that his humanity was real. He had a demonstrable ancestral line just like you and I do.

Now, secondly, not only did he have an ancestral line, there was the whole matter of his birth. His birth. Look at Luke 2 as we look at a familiar passage here and we're not going to spend any time on any one particular point, just looking at it in overview. Luke 2. I just want to point out one thing about the familiar birth narrative to you. In Luke 2, we'll pick it up in verse 3,

3 ... everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

And of course, she was carrying our Lord Jesus at the time. There was a real pregnancy that was fulfilled, a supernatural one, a virgin conception to be sure, but she carried him to full term like any other human mother does and carries her baby. She was with child.

Then in verse 6 you see,

6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7  
And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths,  
and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

All I want you to see, we're keeping things really simple on the surface here tonight, is that Mary gave birth to a real baby in the normal manner of the day. She gave birth to a real baby in the normal manner of the day. What does that tell us for our theme tonight is that Christ's humanity was real. This wasn't a figment. Think about it this way, this idea that Christ was an illusion, a phantom or something like that. Try telling that to Mary after she delivered him. Those of you that have borne a few children, one or two or three or however many, try telling Mary that that was a phantom that she delivered. It's not going to happen. His birth was real. It's a sign of the reality of his humanity. Now going along and Scripture doesn't give us a full biography of Christ, it doesn't give us a year by year account of his life, that's not the purpose of the Gospels to do that as though they were a historical biography in the sense that we're used to reading today, but it gives us enough to help us realize, enough highlights, enough points to realize that there was a development in the life of Christ and so we see his ancestral line, we see his birth, and then we see that he had normal human growth and development. Normal human growth and development. He developed physically. He developed intellectually.

You're in Luke 2, look at verse 40, actually go to verse 21 just to add a little section to it here. Luke 2:21,

21 And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name  
was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was  
conceived in the womb.

So we see him going through the traditional Jewish rite of circumcision in his eight days there. In Luke 2:40 you see this statement,

40 The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom;  
and the grace of God was upon Him.

In his human nature, he grew physically. He grew taller. He grew stronger. His mind developed and he increased in wisdom and the grace of God was upon him. So we see him growing from infant into adolescence.

Look at verse 42,

42 And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; 43 and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it,

He was 12 years old, he was traveling with his parents. This is not a phantom that's doing that. This is not a ghost. This is not an apparition. This is a real human boy growing according to human development and Scripture records that and shows us this development as we go along.

Look at verse 51 here.

51 And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

So you just see this picture of his growth. You get enough snapshots of these incidents during his youth to help you realize that he was growing like any other human baby did and he grew in reality. Somewhere along the line, he learned carpentry from his father, Joseph. Not his biological father but his legal father, Joseph.

Look at Mark 6. Go back to the Gospel of Mark. Matthew, Mark, Luke. Go back to Mark in chapter 6 and now we are in the midst of his teaching ministry and in Mark 6:1 we read this,

1 Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him. 2 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?"

Notice the struggle that they were having. They said, "Who is this man? Where did he get this ability? He's a man, how can he do miracles like this?" And they go on and their perplexity deepens as they remember the history of his prior life. In verse 3 it says,

3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.

The only point here being for this evening is that their struggle in understanding him, at a human level their struggle in believing what was happening was that they knew where he came from, they knew his family, and by every appearance he looked like any other man. His humanity was full, it was real. He had lived among them enough for them to say, "I know his family situation. I know his occupation. I know who his father is." Everything that you and I would recognize about one another, knowing each other, knowing

something about employment, a little bit about where we came from, our hometowns, all of that was true of Jesus. Tonight, simply indicating that these were aspects of the reality of his humanity, he had a proven ancestral line; he was born like any other baby according to the manner of the day; he grew; he came into adulthood; he had skills; he had family; he had half-siblings. These things are only true if his humanity is real. This is compelling and it's only the start of everything that we look at to know the reality of his human life.

Now what else can we say? Remember, what we're laying out here is that he had a human lifespan: ancestry, birth, growth and development. Finally we see that he had a human death in the manner of thousands like him in the day. His death, the final aspect of his human lifespan. Look at the Gospel of John 19. And I realize we're just breezing through these things here this evening but that's alright. Sometimes it's helpful just to have an overview, to have a satellite view of these things and to see the great big picture without stopping to dwell on any individual aspect, to see the whole picture, that's what we're trying to do here this evening. What we find as we read the Gospel accounts is that there was a finality to his human lifespan.

In John 19:32 when Jesus had been crucified, and you know the story, verse 32, John 19,

32 ... the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; 33 but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

Roman soldiers who were trained in this, recognized his death and when they pierced his side, what came out? Physically bodily fluids flowed from his pierced side. Phantoms and ghosts don't do that. Fluid and blood doesn't come out of a ghost, it comes out of real humanity and the piercing of his side in addition to fulfilling prophecy, was an indication that his humanity was real. Now the Roman soldiers weren't trying to prove that point in what they did, they were just doing their job and making sure he was really dead and that there wasn't going to be any problems when he was supposed to be executed, but in their uncoerced way, God proved another way the reality and the genuineness of the humanity of Christ.

So from ancestry, to birth, to growth through human life, to occupation, to family associations, to recognition by his contemporaries as a man, even to his death, every aspect from point A to point B and everything in between, what's between A and B? That just occurred to me. From A to Z is what I should have said, and every point in between, you see these marks of the reality of his humanity. He had a genuine human lifespan that is recorded for us in Scripture.

Now so our Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, when we say that the Word became flesh, God became a man, God in human flesh, what we're saying is that this was a real complete identification with our humanity. He had a real, complete, genuine, human nature that

was fully like ours except for the presence of sin. Everything else about his human existence was in perfect identity with ours. Now secondly, there's more that we can say about this. He had human needs. He had human needs during his time on earth. Now we're only going to touch on these issues ever so briefly, again, just giving a sample, a taste of these things, and to recognize that the humanity of Christ is verified for us in Scripture by multiple perspectives, by many different ways that you look at it, at any way that you would want to look at it you find the humanity of Christ affirmed in the clear teaching of Scripture.

Now as human beings, we have needs and Christ felt those needs himself. First of all, and here you can turn to the Gospel of Matthew, if you would, Matthew 4, let's read verses 2 and 3 just briefly. Matthew 4, the Spirit had led him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil and what happened there? Verse 2,

2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

He experienced hunger. Verse 3,

3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

He was tempted to disobey God by the devil. He experienced human hunger, he experienced temptation without falling into sin, but he experienced the sense of temptation, the appeal to sin against God was presented to him in his humanity.

Turn to the Gospel of John 4 and you'll see something else. He was tempted and he was tired. He experienced human fatigue and experienced also human thirst, as we'll see here. John 4:6-7 where he meets the woman from Samaria and discloses his messianic reality to her. In John 4:5, let's start there so we read the full sentence.

5 So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; 6 and Jacob's well was there.

So Jesus, now remember I told you how incidental these testimonies to his humanity are? Here's just an incidental comment that would almost seem to be a throw-away statement but it's not. Verse 6,

6 So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

This one who at another time in his life had been hungry, had been tempted, now we see him fatigued, we see him tired, we see him feeling the effects of the journey of the day. Then in verse 7 we see that he's thirsty. Chapter 4, verse 7,



7 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

We could have looked at him on the cross saying, "I thirst." So we see that Christ is feeling the limitations, feeling the need of humanity just like you and I do. When you're tired, when you're tempted, when you're hungry, when you're thirsty, let those bodily urges, those bodily needs tonight, tomorrow, for however long this stays present in your mind, let the simplicity of the feeling of those human needs be a reminder that points you to Christ and a reminder that says, "Oh, my Lord felt something like this but without sin. My Lord knew what it was like to be hungry and thirsty. I'm tired, my Lord knew what that was like. I've been tempted, my Lord knew what that was like. I've sinned, my Lord knew nothing of that." But in these aspects of humanity that are not connected to our sinfulness, we find our Lord walking through them, experiencing them himself.

Now do you know what I find so striking about this? Do you know why this is so remarkable? Do you know why it's so wonderful? This is striking because it is so ordinary. It is so ordinary and you remember who this Jesus is, right? You remember that he was the pre-existent Son of God. You realize that he dwelt with God and he was with God and he was God before the beginning of time. You realize that he was on the receiving end of the worship of angels and he left his heavenly abode and came down to earth to live amongst us as a man, as a human, and in the ordinary nature of this, the glory of the condescension of Christ is displayed for us in remarkable splendor. This one who created the worlds by his spoken word subjected himself, voluntarily took on humanity and identified with us so completely in it, that he experienced hunger and thirst, temptation and fatigue. That's how great our Lord Jesus is and you see the humility of Christ put on glorious splendorous display by the fact that he who left his heavenly home identified with us in our humanity to the fullest extent.

He is unlike any other. You know, our men of power, what we're used to in our society, what we're used to in our world, is that the ones that have the most live the highest. They've got the biggest houses. They've got the fastest cars. They've got everything that this world has to offer and they're insulated from a lot of the difficulties that you and I experience in our more humble existence and they like it that way. Well, they can have it. What we see with Christ was he who was infinitely above them, however, chose out of love for the sake of us, for the sake of everyone who would ever believe in him, to identify with our humanity down to the lowest, most common, basic nature of human needs. He voluntarily did that. He gladly submitted to his Father's will that this would be what he would do, and when you remember the majesty of his glory, the greatness of his being, the infinite value of his eternal essence, and that he stepped down to this to walk through what you and I walk through? I want to tell you, Jesus is someone special and it's shown in the way that he identified with our very ordinary humanity in those physical needs.

Now thirdly, Jesus had human emotions. He had human emotions unmixed with sin, but Jesus knew the texture of human feelings, he was not a robot, and we see this in multiple ways. We'll find one example from each Gospel, at least one. Turn back to Matthew 9

and I'm just taking the sequence of these as just canonical, going to make it easy for us to walk through. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is the order, just chose on the basis of the order of the Gospels in the Bible is all. Jesus had human emotions. Do you know what? He felt compassion. He felt compassion, Matthew 9:35.

35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

Now look, we know each other here, right? You know me, I know most of you to one degree or another and it's no secret that some of us here tonight are feeling distressed and dispirited, weighed down by the nature of life, weighed down by all manner of affliction, some of our own doing, some out of our control, some imposed upon us by others, and the swirl of the affliction can almost drown you. I get that. I've been there. All I want you to see tonight is this, is that Jesus when he saw people afflicted during his earthly life, felt compassion upon them, felt sympathy upon them. Those of you from legalistic backgrounds are conditioned, sadly, that God is a disciplinarian and he views us that way in our affliction and views us as a disciplinarian and you're just waiting for the next round of adversity to hit as punishment for your sins. Well, what I want you to see here this evening is that when Jesus saw people distressed and dispirited, his reaction to them was one of human compassion. He sympathizes with us.

Look over at Hebrews. We should dwell on this for just a moment because there are so many things that I want to do to help you with as a pastor over the course of the years, but if there's anything that I would want you to take away this evening is that the humanity of Christ gives him a capacity for care, for compassion, for gentleness, for an attitude of mercy toward you because he has walked through this difficult sod, he has felt the weight of the human experience, and when he saw others, when he saw sinners in that dispirited discouraged sense where all hope seemed to have been extinguished, his reaction was one of compassion, of love, of gentleness, of kindness.

Look at Hebrews 2, another clear statement about the humanity of Christ. Hebrews 2:14,

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. 16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things

His humanity. He identified with us in the fullness of our humanity. In our flesh and blood, in his life experience, he identified with it all and why did he do that? What was his point? What was he trying to accomplish?

so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

He did this so that he could show mercy to us. He did this so that he could offer that perfect life as a sacrifice to turn the wrath of God away from us. He did this out of love. This was an expression of the perfection of his love, the perfection of his grace, the perfection of his patience, the perfection of his kindness.

He did this to redeem us and need we say, need we realize that the one who came as a faithful, merciful Redeemer is one who is viewing us in sympathy? Viewing you tonight in your affliction with the arms of compassion held open wide? Willing to receive your troubled soul that you might find rest and peace in him? He had real human emotions. His compassion on the dispirited was great. It was deep. It was broad. It was wide. It was wonderful. He hasn't changed. He's the same now that he was then. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, Hebrews 13:8.

So even though I understand that the nature of affliction and the darkness that you sometimes feel inside your mind and inside your own feelings makes you think that there is a black cloud between you and God and you tend to view God through the lens and the perspective of your immediate human experience and you project that darkness as though God were looking on you in darkness, beloved, if you're in Christ, it's not like that at all. He came to save you. He came to show mercy and faithfulness and kindness and love and all of those wonderful aspects of his attributes to you, to reconcile you to God, to help you, to be the one who would be your Helper. You remember, don't you, that that's one of the names that Jesus ascribed to our indwelling Holy Spirit, the Helper?

Well, if he's helping us, he's favorably disposed toward us and his view toward us, his interactions with us are flavored by the fact that he had compassion while he was here on earth. He knows the difficulty of life here and in kindness and in mercy, he extends that grace to us. So don't go by the way that you feel about it tonight, don't go simply by the perspective of your difficult circumstances, look to who Christ really is, look to what Scripture says about him and by faith receive and believe what Scripture says that he did all of this that he might be a faithful and merciful High p\Priest to you, and find in that your hope and your confidence and your strength to go forward, beloved. His humanity points you to all of those things.

Do you see how precious his humanity is? Do you? And all of a sudden the affliction of this life is swallowed up into something of greater transcendence and we remember our Lord was afflicted more than we ever were. We're never going to bear the sins of anyone. On the cross, he bore the sins of the entirety of the church in his body. He knew what affliction was like. He knew what unjust treatment was like and he's come through on the other side; he's come through the grave; he's resurrected; he's ascended on high and now he's in heaven where he represents us as our brother, as our faithful High Priest, the one who loves us and gave himself up for us. You see, this is where your soul rests. This is

where your soul finds hope. Not in anything about circumstances but in Christ and who he is and in his love for you. I love him, don't you?

Now, Matthew 26. He had human emotions, compassion. Scripture shows him feeling human sorrow, Matthew 26:36.

36 Then Jesus came with them [with his disciples] to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. 38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

His disciples stumbled, faltered, you know, they couldn't even stay awake in his hour of need but the point here is that his soul felt the grief of the hour and he knew what it was like to be abandoned in his time of greatest need. Well, beloved, don't you think after he gave his life for you on the cross, don't you think as he represents you before God in heaven and you go to him with your broken heart, you go to him and say, "Lord, I've been betrayed here. People I trusted have violated my trust." Don't you think that after all that he's been through and the purpose that he came was to become a faithful, merciful High Priest to represent you to God and to represent God to you, don't you think that he'll hear that with sympathy, that cry of your heart in sympathy? Of course he will. That's why he came was that he would be that kind of High Priest to us and when you go to Christ with your broken heart, you can have the assurance he knows what deep grief of the soul feels like and you can know that therefore he will receive you with sympathy. There is no one like him. There is no one more wonderful, more important in your life than the Lord Jesus Christ and if you have Christ, you have all. If you don't have Christ, you don't have anything.

Well, as you continue to read in Scripture, you'll find him experiencing the human emotion also of anger, Mark 3:5. He was going to heal a man. There were opponents who didn't think he should do that on the Sabbath and he said in Mark 3:4,

4 ... "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent. 5 After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Instant, immediate healing. He didn't need a physical therapist to straighten out the stiffened joints. He healed him immediately. The point here for this evening is that he looked at those people with righteous indignation. Their attitudes were sinful, they were wicked, and Jesus felt the human emotion of righteous indignation against them.

Compassion, sorrow, anger, Scripture describes him as feeling joy. You don't need to turn here. In Luke 10:21 it says,

21 At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight."

Compassion, sorrow, anger, joy, the breadth of human emotion. Without sin, I keep saying and repeating that. The breadth of human emotion found in his human experience. How could that be? How could those human emotions be experienced by the Lord of glory? It's because his humanity was real. It was real physically in his physical growth, it was real in the nature of his inner life as well. There was, if I can use this term, using it broadly not as a field of study, there was a psychological dimension to his humanity as well and he entered into the fullness of the range of human experience even in his emotions.

Finally you see him expressing human love in John 11:5. It simply says,

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

He had genuine human feelings, human emotions, and so when we come to him, we realize that we have someone that has identified fully with our humanity. Human lifespan. Human emotions. Human needs.

Finally, point 4, is that he was recognized as a man. He was recognized as a man. We kind of alluded to this earlier when we looked at the passage from Mark 6 but, beloved, recognize this, recognize that Jesus faced adversaries, faced critics who would have loved to have done anything to discredit him and they wanted to do that, and his contemporaries, the men and women who lived at the same time in the same region, who actually interacted with him during his earthly life, his contemporaries saw him as a human being, saw him as a man, not as some celestial being, not as some apparition, not as a ghost, not anything like the false teachers were promulgating in the days of the Apostle John.

Look at John 10:33. Jesus had just made an astonishing claim to deity in verse 30. He said,

30 "I and the Father are one."

"I am of one essence with God the Father. We have an identical essence that We share together." Well, the Jews didn't take too kindly to that in verse 31,

31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him [they wanted to kill him]. 32 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?"

"I have done nothing but good during the course of My ministry here. I have taught. I have healed. I have lived before you. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? Why are you

stoning Me? What guilt do you find in Me that justifies the fact that you have rocks in your hand cocked and ready to throw them against Me? On what righteous ground do you do that?" Fair question, right? "What's the charge against Me? Before you execute Me, why don't you tell Me why." Verse 33,

33 The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy [and here it is for tonight] and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

They said, "We see You," they acknowledged him, they recognized him as a man, as a human being with full humanity and they could not handle the fact that he made claims to deity because he was a man. The point for tonight is that those who saw him acknowledged the reality of his humanity which kind of brings us full circle, doesn't it? We started in 1 John, the first four verses of 1 John, "what we have seen with our eyes, touched with our hands, heard with our ears concerning the Word of Life, this is what we proclaim to you." The only difference in his humanity from ours was that he was without sin. 1 Peter 2:22 says,

22 [He] committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth.

Now, I could hear somebody, perhaps new to the teaching of Scripture, asking this question, fair question, "Does this even matter? Why are we spending so much time on the humanity of Christ? Is it so important to justify the time that we've spent in God's word together here this evening and that we're going to add to on Sunday?" Let me encourage you all to be back with us on Sunday as we go further into this and celebrate Communion together. It will be a wonderful time. But does this even matter?

Well, the Apostle John thought so. In 1 John 4:2 he said this, he said,

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

That's 1 John 4:2-3. The Apostle John writing as the appointed representative of the Lord Jesus Christ himself says this, he says: false teachers who deny the humanity of Christ are threatening the very essence of Christianity. If Christ is not a man, then there is no Christianity. If a teacher denies or questions the humanity of Christ, he is automatically identified as a false teacher who is from the devil himself.

Why is that so? Well, beloved, you have to remember the purpose for which he came. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners the Apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:15, "of whom I am foremost," Paul said. By the way, just an incidental side note in light of that verse, prompted a thought in my mind, if Paul was the chief of sinners, and he said that he was under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, if Paul was the chief of sinners and the Lord saved him and forgave him of all of his many sins, do you know what that

means for you and me? It means that he'll forgive our sins too. If he saved the worst sinner, then everyone else is included in the realm of his saving intention, his saving invitation. There is no sin that you have committed that places you beyond the grace of God in light of that. It was the whole reason he came was to save a sinner just like you. Well, praise the Lord for that, huh? I don't know about you but I've got a lot of sins that need to be forgiven. I've got a lot of remaining corruption that needs to be cleaned out. There will be more sins in my life in the future. How wonderful to know that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, 1 John 1:7, cleanses us from all sin, that those who come to him by faith alone, find a merciful receptive Savior glad to receive, glad to forgive, glad to set aside the punishment that we deserve and to return instead of punishment, the full blessing and love and mercy of God upon our souls and to welcome us into his family. There ain't no one like him.

Love like that, grace like that is amazing but his humanity was necessary for him to be a Savior like that for us. Why is that so? Well, just follow with me here. We're almost done here. You're a man, you're a woman who has sinned. Well, if there's going to be a Savior for you, it needs to be someone who shares your humanity. If Jesus Christ was not a man, he could not have died for the sins of men. If Jesus Christ was not a man, he could not be a human example to us. If he was some celestial being, whatever a celestial being does is not an example for us in our human living. But if Christ was a man, and he is, then his example is one that we can look to. If Jesus Christ was not a man, he could not sympathize with you in your human trials but as we've seen here tonight, Jesus Christ is a man, the greatest man who ever lived. That essential to your salvation and your walk with God because his humanity identifies him with us and his humanity and his perfect righteous life qualified him to be a human sacrifice to appease the wrath of God for sinners just like you. Without his humanity, that whole structure collapses and is ruined. With his humanity, this God-man offered himself as the perfect atoning sacrifice for sinners just like you at the cross and that's why faith in Christ is well-placed; that's how we can know that by trusting him, that he is able to deliver real salvation for real sinners just like you because his identification with our humanity was complete and God imputed to him at the cross the guilt of all of your sin, punished him as though Christ had committed every sin that you ever committed, punished Christ like that so that he could treat you as though you had lived the perfectly righteous life that Christ lived. The great exchange, your guilt on Christ, his righteousness on you. What a great Savior.

Let's go before him and close in prayer.

*Lord Jesus, we thank You for Your humanity. We thank You for the immensity of Your kindness, the unfathomable depths of Your great humility, and now having humbled Yourself to the point of death, even death on a cross, now God has highly exalted You, bestowed upon You the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Father, may that confession be the ringing, true, inner confession of every heart under the sound of my voice and may those who truly belong to you, Father, find this evening in Christ the fullness of the sympathy and the mercy of the gracious Savior who extended*

*His arms on the cross and took the nails in His hands and hung there and stayed there until He had drunk the cup in full, until He had borne the fullness of wrath for every one of our sins. O Jesus, how magnificent and great and glorious is Your name! We commit ourselves to You. We pray that You would bless us as we look to You by faith. In the name of Your blessed Son, our Father, we pray. Amen.*

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