

JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD **Mark 1:1**

We're reading Mark chapter 1 and verse 1: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." It's a simple sentence; it's one sentence only. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." It's a sentence that, in our Bible reading, we might possibly fly past, thinking that there's not that much in it and that we've got it—we know this. We're Christians. We've grown up hearing the word, we've grown up in the church. There's not a whole lot to it.

But I've got to say, as I get around amongst churches and amongst Christians and a lot of people, and you talk to them about this idea of Jesus being the Son of God, and you ask them, "What does that actually mean," you get, in many cases, a very vague answer. There are many people who would call themselves Christians and who attend churches in Australia, and when you ask them, "What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God," usually the best answer they can come up with is, "Well, He was born of the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, so I guess that makes Him God's Son."

That's true enough, but that's not anywhere near the whole truth. That's the means by which He came into the world, but that doesn't tell you exactly who came into the world. That is actually almost the beginning of a heresy called Arianism, which today we would know better by the name Jehovah's Witnessing, where it's believed that there was a time when the Son was not. That was the catch cry of the Arians many years ago, around 300 years after the time of Christ. There was a time when He was not, they say. There was a time when God was not the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. What they mean by that is that God the Father is truly God, and the Son and the Holy Spirit are less than truly God.

At the start of the gospel of John, our Bible and any good translation would read very much along the lines of, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." When Jehovah's Witness come to you, if they show you this passage from their Bible, it will read something along the lines of, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was *a* god." Arianism. They make Jesus smaller than God, less than God. Whilst it's not full-blown from the understanding that the reason Jesus is the Son of God is because He was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, that's at the root of it. That's kind of what it's getting at. That's kind of where people are going when they think these things.

So if we come to this first verse of the gospel of Mark, what do we have to think about when we look at it? Well, the scholars tell us, and they may well be right, that they feel that Mark is the oldest of the gospels—the first written. So if Mark is the oldest of the gospels, the first written, well then the first sentence of the New Testament is the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And if that's the first sentence of the New Testament, we might do well to consider its importance.

Think about it. It's come after a 400-year drought. The Old Testament finished at the end of the book of Malachi, and for 400 years there's no written revelation—nothing, no news; no news from God to God's people. I'm not saying that God wasn't active in the intertestamental period

between the Old and the New Testament, but He was not communicating to His people through prophets and through the written word. The written word in the Old Testament closed at Malachi. For 400 years—silence.

Imagine you lost your source of news. We've all got a source of news. We watch the news at night, or I get it from the Internet, or you get it from the radio. You've got your source of news. And the news stops. It'll come back. Surely it'll come back. A year—no news. Five years—no news. Ten years—no news. Families come and go. No news. It doesn't come back.

Imagine, you know, a sort of imaginary scenario. You've got this little Jewish household, Mr. and Mrs. Simeon, and Mr. Simeon's got a TV room and the TV on the wall. And it doesn't come on. Nothing ever happens. But every night at six o'clock, he sits in front of it. And she says, "Why do you just keep sitting there?" And he says, "Well, my dad said that one day news is coming. One day, that thing is coming back to life, and we're going to get something." "It will never happen! It's been 400 years. Forget it!"

Monday, the light goes green, the screen flickers into life and up scrolls—like the beginning of a movie, maybe "Ben-Hur" or "Star Wars"—up scrolls a sentence. *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.* What does it say? What does it mean? Why did it start with that? Why is that first bit of news that comes after 400 years? That's what we've got to look into. That's what we've got to come to understand.

Indeed, the gospel of Mark is built around the whole idea of the thesis that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Probably, if you read it as one continuous reading it seems that the gospel of Mark is building to the point in chapter 15, verse 39, where the Roman soldier, witnessing the death of Christ on the cross, says, "Surely, this was the Son of God!" And if you trace that idea of somebody witnessing that Jesus is the Son of God, it moves you on in Mark's gospel through to the end. To Mark this was obviously very important, and they say that Mark wrote his gospel under the supervision of Peter. Mark was Peter's personal assistant, or secretary. So if Mark got his gospel from Peter, well then Peter also thought that it was very important that we understand what it means that Jesus is the Son of God.

Think also of the apostle Paul—the book of Acts, chapter 1, verse 20. Paul is converted. He's prayed for, he receives his sight back, and it says he immediately started to preach. And what did he start to preach? He immediately began preaching that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Once again, to Paul this was incredibly important. Why was that the first thing that he went into the synagogue and said—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

Look at the book of John, chapter 5 and verse 18. Jesus is having, as he had, many arguments with the Pharisees and the priests. They get angry with Him for calling Himself the Son the God, and they make an accusation. They say, "By calling yourself the Son of God, you are making yourself God."

So we really need to get into this sentence, break it down, and come up with what it means. We need to find out why it's so significant. And I've decided to go there by two ways. We'll go, first, by a simple word study. We'll look at the words and we'll work out what the significance

of those words is. Then we'll trace the idea of the Son of God through the Old Testament very quickly. We'll go lightly across a number of Scriptures, get to the end, and come to our conclusion.

If we look at this sentence, it actually starts in literal Greek, "Beginning gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." So the first word is *beginning*. We add "the" beginning to make it sound better in English. And if the first word is "beginning," well then, what's Mark pointing to? Is he pointing to the start of this gospel? You've got to conclude, No, he's not. He's pointing to the start of all things. He's pointing back to Genesis. "In the beginning, God." *In* the beginning.

It's the same as John, who also points us back to the beginning: "In the beginning was the word." Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus right back to where? Right back to the beginning—right back to Adam in the Garden. "In the beginning." We're meant to link this in. This one word is meant to make us consider all the Scripture that came before it.

Then you come to *gospel*. Notice in the little illustration I gave, I kept stressing the idea of news. Many of you are probably already aware of the fact that "gospel" comes from a word, "evangelion," which literally means "good news." The beginning of the gospel. The beginning of the good news. Imagine that idea—the news scrolls up in front of you. "What's the news? What's the news?" It's good news. The beginning of the gospel. The beginning of the good news. So this drought of revelation is breaking with good news.

Then you come to the name of *Jesus*: Jesus in Greek, "Iesous" in Hebrew, and we say "Joshua" or "Yeshua." And what does it mean? Literally, it means "Yahweh," or God, "is salvation"; or, "salvation of or from God." So the name Jesus means Savior, and it means that God is the Savior. And we're told that Joseph was specifically told by the angel to call Him Jesus, for He will bring salvation. He will be the Savior of many.

The next word, Christ: Christos; Messiah; the anointed one; marked or set aside for service. And that's where our earlier reading of Psalm 2 comes into consideration. In Psalm 2 it speaks of God's anointed Messiah—God's anointed, the Messiah—exactly the same word, Messiah. It means someone who's been set aside for service. It literally means that a priest or a prophet has poured oil over someone's head, and it's a symbol of being set aside.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God. *The Son of God*. Here we get into another word, the singular masculine word "huios"—the son. We say "the" son, not "a" son. The son. It's a strong word. And when in Hebrew idiom, or when people of that area or that part of the world called someone "the" son, what they were saying is that he was the inheritor from his father. The term "the son" meant that he was the same as his father. His father might have six sons, but the one who was "the" son is the one who was going to inherit and continue the father's name. *The son*.

You read in Scripture, for example, "the son of a carpenter," or "the son of the carpenter." In the gospel of John, they ask, "Who is he? He says he was before Abraham. But is he not the son of a carpenter?" What does that mean? It means he's the carpenter. And when Jesus said, "I am the Son of God," what does that mean? It means, "I'm God."

There's another phrase, "The son of the Devil." Jesus uses it in His argument with the Pharisees in John chapter 8, and He tells them that they are the sons of the Devil. What's He saying? He's saying they're devils. He's not messing with words there; that's a strong phrase. He's saying they're devils.

So just from the words in the sentence—"The beginning," reaching back to Genesis; "of the gospel," good news"; "of Jesus Christ," the Savior, the anointed one; "*the* Son of God"—it's becoming a very important sentence. If someone is the Son of God, well then, they are God. That's the significance of the words.

And then, as I said, I want us to work our way through the Scriptures. Now it's up to you whether or not you want to do this with me. I'll read them to you. If you want to follow it through in your Bible, we start with Genesis 3:15. I didn't put all of these smaller Bible references into your order of service, but if we start at Genesis, we pick up an idea.

Now what's the story here? Well, Adam and Eve have sinned. They've fallen into sin. And God comes to them in the Garden, and upon them He lays curses and He also lays blessings. But He lays curses only on the serpent, on Satan himself. In cursing the serpent, starting at verse 14, we pick up on something, just one word, and it's important. So starting at Genesis 3, verse 14:

"¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.'" And here's 15: "¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring;" What is this next word? "*He* shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." "He." The seed of a woman is a male. It's a son. The seed of the woman in the prophecy is going to be a Son. Right at the start, from the beginning of sin, Adam and Eve were told to wait for a Son, who will be the deliverer. "*He* shall bruise your head."

If we try to follow this idea of the Son, just flick forward to Genesis chapter 17. We're looking here at Abraham and God's promises to Abraham. Now when we read these, we think, Well, God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled through Isaac. But if you read the things that are said in the promise to Abraham, they're too big to be referring only to Isaac. There's more in sight here than Isaac. Even if Abraham understood mainly that these blessings were to fall through his son Isaac, he also understood that there was more than Isaac in sight here. Remember Jesus said, Abraham saw my day, and rejoiced from far off.

So Genesis 17, starting at verse 4—God promising Abraham: "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. ⁷And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you." And we'll stop there.

The main thing that I want you to see here is that God establishes a covenant with Abraham that's everlasting. Isaac lived and Isaac died. The promises are to more than just the literal blood or seed of Isaac. The promises are to more than simply Isaac. What we can conclude is that this promise of a Son that started back in Genesis 3 to Eve has come to Abraham, and Abraham carries the promise of the Son.

Jump forward. We'll skip a few generations. Genesis chapter 49. We get to Jacob. Jacob's an old man, down in Egypt. Finally the family, the covenant family that carries the Seed, has been reunited. And Jacob, who is now called "Israel" knows that the time has come for him to pass from this world, and he prophesizes over his sons. We'll just go straight down—Genesis chapter 49, verse 8. There are various prophecies over all his sons, but let's just hear the prophecy over Judah:

“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. ⁹ Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? ¹⁰ The scepter” —I'll just stop and give a moment of explanation. The scepter is the symbol of kingship. In the ancient Near East, the king had a scepter. If he held the scepter out towards you—mercy; if the scepter doesn't get held out—death. He's saying, the scepter, the king, comes from Judah. ¹⁰ ‘The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. ¹¹ Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. ¹² His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.”

So if we were to read all of those promises, and we don't have time to do it, what we would find is the only other one who got a promise even close to Judah's was Joseph, Joseph being Jacob's all-time favorite son. But Joseph does not get the promise of the Son, the king, the ruler.

Just tracing this idea of a Son: Eve was promised a Son. Abraham becomes the covenant nation, or the carrier of the covenant. It's the Son of Abraham. Now we get down through Isaac and Jacob to Judah, and the Son is now within the family of Judah. We keep going forward. Second Samuel chapter 7, verses 4 to 17. We're in the time of King David, and David takes it in his heart to build a temple for God. He notices he has built himself a palace, but God—or the presence of God, the symbolic presence of God, the arc of the covenant—is within a tent. And David says, “Is it right that I live in a palace and God lives within a tent?” He says, “I'm going to build a temple. And Nathan the prophet says, “Do all that's within your heart.” So David decides to build the temple.

Then God speaks to Nathan that night and says to Nathan, “No. God told David he will not build me a temple. He's a man of warfare, a man of blood. He shed too much blood. He will not build me a temple. But I have a message for him. So let's hear the message that God has for David in response to David's offer to build God a temple. Second Samuel chapter 7, and we'll start at verse 4:

“⁴ But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵ ‘Go and tell my servant David, “Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? ⁶ I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. ⁷ In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’” ⁸ Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.””

We’ll stop there and ask a few questions of it. First of all, you’ve got this idea that the prophecy has an immediate fulfillment, but that what happened in its immediate fulfillment is not enough. David had a son, his name was Solomon. Solomon built a temple to the Lord, and Solomon founded a dynasty of kings—the kings of Judah. But the house of Solomon did not survive forever. Through the sin of the house of David, that kingdom was brought down. The people were carried off into exile to Babylon, and from Babylon they were brought back, around 400 years before the birth of Christ. And that’s where the prophecy that we were speaking of earlier stopped. That’s where the written revelation stopped.

But if you look at the promises that are given to David, think particularly of the idea that “your throne shall be established forever,” from verse 16. “And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” Think of the idea that he will have a Son who “shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of *His* kingdom forever,” and you find that one in verse 13. Solomon didn’t establish a kingdom that lasted forever. You’ve sort of got to take what applies directly to the human offspring of David and filter it out as you try to consider this promise in light of the coming Son, that coming Savior.

Jesus was disciplined with the rod of man and with the stripes of the Son of man, but not for His own sins—for ours. You need to sort of be aware of these things. It would be a big mistake to take a messianic prophecy such as that and try to make every part of it literally fit into the life of Jesus. But what I want you to see is that the undeniable idea within that prophecy is that the Son who is coming is now coming from the house of David. That’s the idea.

Eve was promised a Son; Abraham was promised a Son; Judah was promised a Son. Now David is promised a Son. This line of progression, where we've got this idea that a Son will come who will bruise the head of the serpent, who will change things, who will make things better, who will deliver His people forever in the sight of their God, who will establish a kingdom that will never fail—this is all coming together in the line Eve, Abraham, Judah, David.

Now we've only got a couple more references to skip across. If we turn back to our earlier reading, in Psalm 2, as I was saying to you before I read it, we need to look at the Psalm and see that there's more in this than the coronation of an earthly king—that the promises here are greater than any single son of David ever knew. Start at verse 6, God speaking:

“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.’⁷ I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you.’” And from that we've got one thing to think about. This Son of David, God has just told him, “He is my Son.” The Son of David is to be the Son of God. The lines come together. “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.’¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” And how are they to express this service, this fear of God, this rejoicing with trembling? “¹² Kiss the Son.” The idea here is of a frightened servant, crawling up to the king's throne, begging for mercy. “Kiss the Son.”

The Psalm started off with, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed.” And now we find those same kings being warned. “Therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth.¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.”¹² Kiss the Son.” Where is the peace with God that's going to come? Through the Son—kissing the Son. This Son of David, who's also the Son of God—“Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”

One last Old Testament reference I want us to look at, Isaiah chapter 9. Well known—Isaiah chapter 9, verses 2 to 7. We'll look especially at verses 6 and 7. Isaiah chapter 9. And let's just sum up where we are so far with this very fast sort of tracing of the idea of a coming Son in the Old Testament. The Son will be a son of Eve, who will rescue His people. The promises end up in the household of Abraham. From the household of Abraham, a Son will come. From Abraham, they go to Jacob; from Jacob to Judah; from Judah to David.

Then as we come past the times of the original kingdom of Israel, the household of David, the kingdom of Judah, we found that promise in Psalm 2, where the Son of David is called the Son of God. And now it gets even clearer. I guess you could say the spotlight really falls on the idea of the Son of God in the book of Isaiah. Chapter 9, reading from verse 2:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.³ You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.⁴ For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have

broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.” And now we come to the part I want us to really pay attention to: “⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”

This Son who will sit on the throne of David, come from the house of David, what will He be called? “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” This Son of David is the Son of God. This promise that started thousands of years ago, the ancient promise in the Garden to Eve, that a Seed will come who will crush the serpent’s head—He will do this. This promise gets fleshed out—progressive revelation—as we move through the Old Testament, and in the end, we find that this Son will come from the house of David, and that He will be Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Let’s go back and have a quick look at Mark chapter 1, verse 1—that first bit of revelation, that first bit of written revelation, after 400 years. “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Ask a question. It’s a simple question: If Jesus Christ is the Son of God, if the promises are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, if the Son of God is the Son of David, if this whole line of prophecy is being fed into this one sentence, is it possible, if Jesus is God, for there ever to have been a time when He was not God? Is God changeable? Can God stop being God?

People ask the question, “Is anything impossible for God?” The only thing that God cannot do is not be God. God is God. And if Jesus is God, then God is eternally God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not the Son of God because He was born of the virgin Mary in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the eternal Son of God. God has *always* been the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And this first sentence of the New Testament, if we’re taking it in what the scholars tell us is its chronological order, is explosive, because God has always been God the Son. There has never been a moment when He wasn’t God the Son. God—God the Son—has come into the earth. God—God the Son—is born in Bethlehem. God—God the Son has come to stamp on the head of the serpent. That’s the meaning of that one sentence. It’s always been a Trinitarian statement.

God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God has always been the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There never was a moment when the Son was not, as the Arians say. He’s not *a* god, as their modern equivalent, the Jehovah’s Witnesses say. He’s God—the Son of God. He always has been. He always will be. He came to earth for us, for His beloved, for those whom He came to save.

So where do you go with this and what can you do with it? I have to think about that, and the very first thing that I want to say is, Christianity is not a chickenfeed religion. We’re not a religion in the marketplace. This is not a faith that can be compared to others. Buddha is not God the Son of God. No spokesman for Islam is God the Son of God. No idol in Hinduism is

God the Son of God. We're not one of many religions. We're not part of the World Congress of Faith. Our brothers and sisters are not the faithful who have a religion all over the world. Our brothers and sisters are Christians, washed in the blood of God the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the only Savior, the eternal God.

This is not a small-time religion. This is not like walking into a coffee shop and deciding you'll have a latte instead of a cappuccino. This isn't that kind of thing. This is a big deal. This is a life-changing deal. This is everything. If this is true, our lives have no other meaning than to serve, to glorify, and to worship God through His Son Jesus Christ, who came to earth for us. God the Son of God! Jesus Christ, the only Savior. And there is no other, and there is no other way to eternal life, and there is no other promise that's worth the paper that it's written on. There's nothing more. Words fail. How can you describe the importance of this?

Only the words of Jesus do Himself justice. Only the words of Jesus actually come close to describing how important this is. Consider the earlier New Testament reading. Jesus said to them, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him. I *am* the way, the truth and the life."

And if you know your Scripture, you know that when He said, "I AM," it's a claim to divinity. The name that God gave to Moses in Exodus chapter 3 is "I AM. I AM WHO I AM." When Moses said, "Who do I tell the people has sent me," God said, "Tell them I AM WHO I AM" has sent you. Tell them that I AM has sent you. And Jesus says, "I AM."

We go further. What else does this do to us? This humbles us. We must be humbled. The God of glory broke the drought. The good news is, Jesus Christ. There is no place for pride in the sight of God. Human pride is nothing other than foolishness. God is God. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Human achievement is nothing. Our pride is foolishness. We're a broken image. We were created in the image of God, and through the work of Christ, we've been re-created in the image of Christ.

What can we do? What can we do? Our whole Christian life has to arise from our desire to worship and love God. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself." When He gives a statement like that, where He joins two things together—He takes a passage from Deuteronomy and a passage from Leviticus, and He joins them together—He's not giving us the option of tearing them apart. What God has put together, let no man tear asunder. He's not giving us the option of tearing them apart.

Loving God is not loving your neighbor; you love God. We are to love God, the Lord our God, with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And from the love to and of and from God, to love our neighbor as ourselves. Any idea that the works that we bring out are going to purchase salvation is the idea of foolishness. It's a fool's idea. There's no value in them unless they're in Christ. There's no saving grace in any good works that we do. Christ, the Son of God, has done all the good works that save us. And the reason that we are to work and to love our neighbor as ourselves is to be Christ-like in the world.

Romans chapter 8: We've been saved into the image of Christ. And why are we here in the world? To show Christ in the world. Our purpose in life is to do the works that Christ gave us to do: to glorify God, to enjoy Him forever, to spread the gospel, to proclaim that Christ, the Son of God, came into this world to save sinners.

Finally—and I'll try to make it as short as I can—if God has made Himself known in this way, if God the eternal Son of God has come to earth, lived a perfect and holy life, gone to the cross, bearing the burden of our sins and risen from the dead, there's no compromise and there's absolutely no negotiations. This isn't a God who wants to cut a deal. This isn't a God who wants you to come and make a concession and He'll make a concession to you, and you do this, and He does that, and you do this, and He does that, and eventually, in the middle, you come to this happy little agreement.

God has made Himself known in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He's not playing games. It's not a lightweight revelation. It's not something that we're allowed to just rush on by—"Aw yeah, Jesus is the Son of God, get on with life, earn our money." If the Savior is God, then God is the Savior, and we don't have wriggle-room. There's salvation in no other name—the Lord Jesus Christ. By no other name can a man be saved.

I know that all of us here have heard the gospel many a time. But there's a difference between hearing and the hearing of faith. And I still have to say that if your hearing is not the hearing of faith, it's time to repent. Believe the Scripture. Believe the word of God. Believe in Jesus Christ, who lived on our behalf, died on our behalf, and rose again to a place where we will go to Him.

There's a price to be paid for the wickedness in the hearts of people, and that price is eternal and it's infinite. Why? Because sin is against God, who is eternal and infinite. And we're given this life by God through grace. Have you ever thought, as I mentioned the Garden, have you ever asked yourself the question, When Adam and Eve sinned, why didn't God call an end to the proceedings right then, right there? Finished. Why didn't God call an end to it? Why didn't God obliterate humanity? Why didn't God say, "No. Not worth it. Not worth it." Why didn't He just write it all off?

Instead, there was punishment for sin. There was death for sin. God told Adam, "From the dust you came and to the dust you will return. That's the result of your sin." But there was grace. There will be a Seed, the Seed of the woman. He will crush the head of the serpent. There will be rescue. There will be salvation. God didn't finish things then because God had a plan to save people. Us!

We live by the grace of God. The human race exists because God wanted to show forth grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. That's why He didn't call a halt to proceedings upon the sin of the first two. That's why we're here today. That's why we have Scripture. That's why we have the revelation of God. That's why the ultimate revelation of God is God the Son of God came to earth. I'll finish there. "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Would you join me in prayer. Lord, our Father in heaven, let us take your word, store it in our heart. May your word bear fruit in our lives. By the power of your Holy Spirit, may we live Christ-empowered lives that glorify you, that glorify Jesus Christ.

Lord, make us truly Christ-like in all that we do, in all our relationships, in all of our actions, in all of our deeds, in all of our words. Lord, we will fail. Forgive us. You know that we are sinners. Lord, forgive us even now. Forgive this preacher for the failure to glorify God.

Lord, as we go forth from here, bless us. May your Word be our guide and our shining light. May we give glory to Jesus in all things. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.