

28.1.23 am

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Date: 28 January 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] I think we'll begin now our time of worship. 237 in Mission Praise. We're going to begin this time of worship, and we begin with a familiar hymn.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, early in the morning, our song shall rise to thee. Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

We'll stand to sing, and we sing to God's praise. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, early in the morning, our song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy, holy, all the saints adore thee, Casting down their golden crowns, Far round thy glassy sea.

[1 : 44] Children and seven, Falling down before thee, place where the Lord shall be.

[illegible]

In earth and sky and sea Holy, holy, holy merciful and mighty God in the precious Blessed Trinity Let's unite their hearts in prayer. Let's pray.

Amen. Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for this day and we thank You for the words that we have sung that remind us of the privilege that we have to be able to call You our Father.

You are the God who is holy, holy, holy. You are the God who is mighty, who is powerful. The God who brought everything that we see around us and everything that we are into being with a word from nothing.

[4 : 24] You are the God who sustains life. Every breath that we have is a breath that You have permitted that we will have. Every day that we are given is a day that the Lord has made and a day that the Lord has gifted to us.

You are the God who is pure. You are just. You are powerful. You are mighty. You are the God who is eternal. Who has no beginning and will have no end. The infinite, immortal God.

And all these attributes, immortal God.

And yet we thank You, Lord, that You have revealed Yourself to us. That the God whose glory that we see in creation has drawn near to us.

We thank You that God the Word became flesh. That Jesus, Your Son, took on flesh and made His dwelling amongst us.

[5 : 59] We thank You that He is the image of the image of the image of the God.

Knowing that if we are in Christ, knowing that if we are in Christ, we will not be pushed away. But we can come close to You. You are a God who is too holy to be able to look upon sin.

And we are sinners. But we thank You that Jesus took our place. That He came into this world to seek and to save sinners. We thank You that Jesus took our sin, took our curse into His body on the tree.

And if we believe in Him, our sin is gone. Our sin has been paid for. And we are made holy. We are made righteous. We are received.

We are accepted in Christ. So we ask, Lord, that You would enable each one of us to come to Jesus, to be in Jesus.

[7 : 22] We sang the words in that hymn that speak about the fact that often, Lord, we do not see You in Your glory. Holy, holy, holy, though the darkness hide Thee, though the eye of sinful man, Thy glory may not see.

And we confess, Lord, that we are blind by nature. We ask that You would open our eyes, that we would see Jesus, that we would see the glory of Christ, that we would see how desperately we need Him.

And, Lord, that we would come to Jesus and find that grace and forgiveness that is offered freely in Him. And for those of us, Lord, who are Christians, those who have come, we confess that in this world, often the scales are back around our eyes.

We confess that often our eyes are caught by the shiny things of this world. And we lose sight of the glory of Christ. Forgive us, we pray.

Open our eyes afresh, that we may have a fresh vision of Jesus. Lord, that we may have a fresh vision of Jesus. Unblock our ears, that we would hear His call to come and to return to Him.

[8 : 38] And stir our hearts that on this, the Lord's day, we would be in the Spirit. And that we would worship You in spirit and in truth. That the words that we sing would not just be words, but that they would be praise from our hearts.

And, Lord, that our lives would be used, our time, our talents, our resources, all that You have given to us. That we may use these things in our lives for Your glory and not for our own comfort and our own glory.

We ask, Lord, that You would be with us today and that You would help us. We are conscious that we are constantly in need. We pray for those who are grieving. Again, Lord, we are conscious of death in our community in past days.

We ask, Lord, that You would be working amongst the families of those who suffer loss. Those who are grieving for loved ones lost in past days and months and years.

We know that the sting of grief remains a long time. And we pray for the balm of Your Spirit to comfort all those who grieve.

[9 : 51] We pray for those who are ill. For those who are hospitalized. For those who are going back and forth to receive treatment. For those who are at home. We think of them in our mind's eye and we ask, Lord, that You would minister to them.

That they would receive the medical care that they need. And that they would receive Your grace that's sufficient for every day and every situation that we're in. We pray that You would lay hands of healing upon those who are sick, where that be Your will.

And, Lord, that You would uphold those who are going through difficult times. Who may be coming towards the end of life in this world. We pray, Father, for those who are lonely.

Those who feel anxious. Those who are cast down. Those who are listening to the Lord. Lord, that the hope of Christ. That the light of Christ. Would break through the darkness.

That sometimes overwhelms us. And, Lord, we pray. That You would help us. In our lives. To reach out.

[10:53] And to tell people about the light. That there is in Christ. so we pray for all these clubs that are on our notice sheets from community lunches to Little Fishes to Ladies Bible Study and Road to Recovery and the kids clubs, the YF we pray that every endeavour that's made to reach out to tell people about Jesus and to share the love of Jesus that you would bless that and that you would use it for your glory we pray for the study conference we pray for David Court and for John Lachey as they prepare and as they preach we pray that you would speak through them and that the weekend would be a weekend of encouragement a weekend when the name of Jesus is lifted up and each one of us are drawn to Christ so hear our prayers help us Lord we ask we pray for those in our nation you have taught us to pray for those you have allowed to be in authority and as a nation far from you we pray that you would open the eyes of those that you have allowed to be in leadership that they would be humbled that they would call upon the name of the Lord and call us as a nation to call upon the name of the Lord as has been done in times past it seems so far fetched for us to pray that in this nation at this time and yet nothing is impossible for you and we pray for the name of Jesus to go out into all nations we pray for the nations that we have a connection with those that we pray for we pray for Christians and those who have not yet come to Christ and in nations across the world we think of DPRK we pray for Nepal we pray for Romania we pray for Malawi we pray for many places Lord that are on our hearts our hearts we pray for Turkey we pray for Afghanistan we think of Dr. Adam as he prepares to come here soon as well we ask that you would bless him and now Lord we pray that you would go before us that you would help us to have our eyes fixed on Jesus we pray that you would clear our minds from all that would distract us and we pray that you would create in us hearts that are tuned to praise your name for we pray this in Jesus name and for his sake

Amen Boys and girls would you like to come out please how are you all today good good good I've got something to show you today I don't think we're on camera anyway so I'll just go over this for you a bit the bottom of a spinny chair can you see this yep you recognise it Michael yep the bottom of a spinny chair so I'll tell you a wee story about this spinny chair I better just check my notes well this spinny chair it lived in my study and for for it's over nine years now since I've been here for over nine years

I sat in that spinny chair in Harris and for seven years before that I sat in that spinny chair in Loch Cairn and for two or three years before that I sat in that spinny chair in Inverness and for I don't know how many years before that my dad sat in this spinny chair in Skye and I think it was it wasn't last week it was just the week before and I was sitting in the study in my spinny chair it was a comfortable chair you know it was it had a nice comfortable back on it you could spin around and it would lean back and you'd have a weak control like that and thankfully I wasn't in a meeting I wasn't on a zoom call anything like that but I was sitting and I'd been working and I just leaned back a little the desk was just like this here and then there was there was a filing cabinet there and there was books there was a light so it was just crammed into a wee space and I leaned back as I had done a thousand times before and when I leaned back

I just heard a huge crack and I thought what on earth was that and before I knew it I was upside down and back to front rammed between the side of the desk and the filing cabinet so what happened the back wheel snapped the back wheel snapped of the spinning chair and the chair fell backwards I had a somersault and now the chair is in the garage and it'll get dumped sometime I don't know how you dump these things but that's a whole other children's talk for another day but the chair is finished but the point I was going to make this morning is for nine plus seven plus three what's that that's 19 that's 19 for 19 years I've been sitting in this chair for a year before that my dad was sitting in this chair and I had faith in the chair and the second that I leaned back that day to sit in the chair

I had faith that this chair was going to hold my backside and my whole frame and I was going to be fine was that faith enough? was it enough?

[16 : 43] was it? because even though I was sure that this chair was going to hold me it didn't hold me the time came when this chair that had been such a good labourer eventually gave up the time came the day came when this chair said I've had enough of holding this big heavy weight I'm done and I went crashing to the floor so having faith is not enough sometimes sometimes people will say to you you know you just have to have faith have you ever heard that said Michael?

sometimes people will say you might be like in a religious RME class and people might say you just have to have faith it doesn't matter what your faith's in it's just nice that you have faith and everybody's got to have faith and your faith might be different to my faith but we just need to have faith and that's the thing we just have to have faith but the thing is our faith is no use if our faith isn't going to hold us I can have faith in a week chair it cracks I end up upside down I can have faith I can look at a walk see a fresh water walk up the back of our house and I can look at ice and think I have faith that this ice is going to hold me and I might take some steps out but if the ice is just thin what's going to happen?

down I go and so the important thing is not that we have faith but it's who we have our faith in right boys and girls if you want to have your sins forgiven if I want to have my sins forgiven if I want to know that my heart has been cleansed if I want to know that when I die I'm going to get to heaven do I need to have faith?

yeah? but who do I need to have faith in? we need to have our faith in Jesus some people say oh you just have to have faith doesn't matter what religion some people have faith in themselves they just think well I'm trying really hard I'm trying to be a good person sometimes I go to church I might read the Bible I'll say the odd prayer and they actually believe in themselves they're going to take themselves to heaven they have faith in that I'm a good guy they say that kind of faith won't take anybody to heaven there's people who have faith in Islam or Hinduism or Buddhism or Jehovah's Witness or all these other kind of religions and none of these places none of these religions will take them to heaven there's only one way we can be saved there's only one name that we can have our faith in that will take us to heaven and that name is Jesus to have faith in

Jesus he will hold us the chair can hold me but Jesus can hold me he can take me all the way through this world and he can take me and he can take us to heaven if we believe in him so we pray and thank him for that Lord Jesus we thank you that you are that you are our God that you are our saviour we thank you that you have called us to believe in you to have faith in you and we thank you that you are the God who is able to hold us you're able to take all our sins away you're able to give us a new heart you're able to keep us safe all the way through this world even when we go through difficult things you're with us and we thank you that we can have faith that when we come to the end of our time in this world if we are believing in you you will take us through death into life that's everlasting so give us faith we pray and help us to put that faith not in ourselves not in any other name not in any other religion but in Jesus and we ask these things in Jesus name and for his sake amen we're going to sing now and we're going to sing the hymn on the screen and it's speaking about the grace of Jesus yet not I but Christ in me he is my joy

[21 : 44] Jesus my redeemer there is no for I am not to give he is my joy my righteousness and freedom my steadfast love my deep and boundless freedom to this I hope my hope is only Jesus for my life is only bound to his oh how strange and divine I can say all is mine yet not I but to Christ in me it is dark but I am not forsaken for by my side the saviour he will stay I labor on in weakness and rejoicing for in my need his power is displayed to this I hold my shepherd will defend me through the deep the world and the night has been one but I shall overcome yet not

I but to Christ in me fate I dread I know I am forgiven the future is sure the price it has been paid for Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon and he was raised to overthrow the grave to this I hold my sin has been defeated Jesus love and heaven is my need all that chains are released I can say I am free yet not I but Christ in me he read I long to follow Jesus for he has said that he will make me whole and day by day

I know he will renew me until I stand with joy before the throne to this I hold my hope is holy Jesus All the glory Evermore to him When the race is complete Till my lips Shall repeat Yet not I But who cries To me When the race is complete My grace is complete I will To the Ever To him When the race is complete Till my lips Shall repeat Yet not I But who cries To me Yet not I But who cries To me Yet not I

But who cries To me Dear boys and girls If you head To Sunday School And pray For them As they go If we could Turn now In our Bibles To Matthew Chapter 3 Please And we'll Read the Whole of the Chapter Although our Focus will be On the second Half of the Chapter This is God's Word In those Days John the Baptist Came preaching In the Wilderness Of Judea Repent For the Kingdom of Heaven is at And For this

Is he Who was Spoken of By the Prophet Isaiah When he Said The voice Of one Crying in The Wilderness Prepare The way Of the Lord Make His Path Straight Now John Wore a Garment Of camel's Hair And a Leather belt Around his Waist And his Food Was locusts And wild Honey Then Jerusalem And all Judea And all The region About the Jordan Were going Out to Him And they Were being Baptized By him In the River Jordan Confessing Their Sins But when He saw Many of The Pharisees And Sadducees Coming to His Baptism He Said To Them You Brood of Vipers Who Warned You To Flee From The Wrath To Come Bear Fruit In Keeping With Repentance And Do Not Presume To Say To Yourselves We Have I Tell You God is Able For The Fruit is Cut Down And

[27 : 22] Thrown Into The Fire I Baptize You With Water For Repentance But He Who is Coming After Me is Mightier Than I Whose Sandals I Am Not Worthy To Carry He Will Baptize You With The Holy Spirit And Fire His Winnowing Fork is In His Hand And He Will Clear His Threshing Floor And Gather His Wheat Into The Barn But The Chaff He Will Burn With Unquenchable Fire Then Jesus Came From Galilee To The Jordan To John To Be Baptized By Him John Would Have Prevented Him Saying I Need To Be Baptized By You And Do You Come To Me But Jesus Answered Him Let It Be So Now For Thus It is Fitting For Us To Fulfill All Righteousness Then He Consented And When Jesus Was Baptized Immediately He Went Up From The Water And Behold The Heavens Were Open To Him And He Saw The Spirit Of God Descending

Like A Dove And Coming To Rest On Him And Behold A Voice From Heaven Said This is My Beloved! Son With Whom I Am Well Pleased Amen And May God Add His Blessing To That Reading Of His Word We'll Sing Now From Psalm 36 Psalm 36 Verses 5 To 7 Two Stanzas Of The Psalm I'll Read The Verses In English Thy Mercy Lord is In The Heavens Thy Truth doth Reach The Clouds Thy Justice is Like Mountains Great Thy Judgement Deep As Floods Lord Thy Preservest Man And Beast How Precious is Thy Grace Therefore In Shadow Of Thy Wings Men Sons Their Trust Shall Place These Two Stanzas And We Sing In Gaelic Remaining Seated To Sing To God's PraiseNING .

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 44] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[34 : 52] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. of Lords. And yet the ministry, as we have it recorded here, it doesn't begin with a big drama and lights and action and a bang. In fact, it's the opposite.

[36 : 18] Even as we think about the years that have taken us up to this point, Jesus' life has been lived almost in obscurity. For 30 years previous, Jesus has been living as a carpenter in Nazareth. And we know very little about these early years.

We know very little about his teenage years. We've got one small encounter that's recorded for us in the temple. We don't know anything about Jesus' 20s. But now at the age of 30, Jesus, he steps forward into public ministry. John the Baptist has been preparing the way. We were looking at that last week. He was telling the crowds, verse 11, about the one who was to come, whose sandals says, John, I am not worthy to carry. And so there's a growing sense of anticipation and expectation. There's a sense of excitement at the prospect of the coming of Jesus, the coming of the Messiah, the one that for hundreds of years the people have been looking for.

And now in this small section, we see the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, the Messiah. So let's just look for these moments at this passage as we step into the public ministry of Jesus, as Matthew records it. The first thing to note here is the activity of Jesus. Look at verse 13.

The activity of Jesus. It says there in verse 13, Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John.

So the context, we've heard John speaking. We've seen John in the wilderness. He's preparing the way. And then in verse 13, it says, Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John.

[38 : 31] And note here, the activity is on the part of Jesus. It's Jesus that comes to John. It's Jesus that comes to the crowds that were gathered around John.

They don't go looking for him. They don't come to him. It's Jesus that comes to them. And look how Jesus comes.

We don't read about a helicopter being sent or a limo being sent on a special commission to pick up Jesus and to bring him to that place.

We don't read about Jesus being collected in some special limousine and placed on a high pulpit in some grand cathedral. No, Jesus here, he makes the journey himself from rural Galilee into the wilderness of Judea.

Not some grand religious site, but the wilderness in Judea to the Jordan. And Jesus goes to John.

[39 : 43] So the activity, the first move as Jesus begins this ministry of salvation, the activity, the initiative was on the part of Jesus.

He is the one that's doing the moving. He is the one who's doing the coming. And that's the way it was back then, at the beginning, in that place, on that day.

And that's still the way it is today. We don't seek Jesus. Our hearts, our fallen hearts, are in a place where we don't seek Jesus.

We're not looking for him. We're not interested in him. We'd rather sleep. We'd rather go into something else. No one seeks Jesus in our fallen state.

But he seeks us. He comes to us. He comes to us through the word. He arrests us through the word.

[40 : 57] I was speaking to somebody just the other day. I was speaking about going to church, not someone in this church. But someone who went to church and said, it's as if the minister knew that this message was just for me.

The words that were being read, the words that were being preached, they were bursting into my life. It was as if I was the only person in the room. That's when Jesus is seeking someone. That's how he works.

We wonder, how does the man know about me? How are these words that were written so long ago, how are they so relevant to my life? That's Jesus seeking. He comes in the power of the word, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

He tells us about our sin. We start to see it. We start to feel the weight of it. We come under conviction. And we hear the call to repent.

We hear Jesus saying to us, come to me. Repent of your sin. Be converted. Be saved.

[42 : 05] That's the activity of Jesus. In our lives. And so we see the activity as the ministry of Jesus begins.

The activity, the movement, the initiative is Jesus coming to them. And today, perhaps Jesus is coming to someone here.

How are you responding to him? Are you receiving him? Are you hearing him?

Are you opening your heart to him? Or are you turning away from him? The activity of Jesus, point one.

Second point is the humility of Jesus. Verses 14, 13 and 14, sorry. Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him.

[43 : 10] We see the activity of Jesus. And think about that. God the Son. The Lord of Lords. The King of Kings. He's the one doing the running. The humility of Jesus.

And then in verse 14, it says, John would have prevented him. Saying, I need to be baptized by you. And do you come to me? So the coming of Jesus into the world, it was a humble arrival.

We think back. If we rewind just a few years. The coming of Jesus into the world was a humble arrival. He was born into a normal, ordinary family. He wasn't born into a palace.

It was a normal, ordinary family. He was laid in a manger. The welcoming party for Jesus was some rough, unclean shepherds. It was a humble arrival.

And Jesus' early years were spent in a humble, obscure place. Nazareth. Can anything good come from Nazareth, they said? It was a place that was considered to be a backwater.

[44 : 20] A dead end place. And that's where Jesus settled. It was a humble postcode. It was a humble arrival. And as Jesus grew from a boy into a man, he doesn't work as a CEO in some big multinational corporation.

He isn't the chief of staff in some government office. He isn't the director of some department. He spent his time in a humble workshop.

Doing an ordinary job. Do we see humility all the way through the life of Jesus up until this point?

And now as Jesus' ministry begins, it's a humble beginning. As Jesus comes to John and says, I want you to baptize me.

Ligon Duncan says, The first public action of our Lord is to humble himself. The first public action in the ministry of our Lord Jesus is to enter into humiliation.

[45 : 33] He will receive the baptism of repentance, though he is without sin. Though he is the one who knows no sin, he will take upon himself the baptism of repentance.

That, says Ligon Duncan, is the humility of our Lord. And the question to ask at this point is, is why?

I mean, if we look in the mirror, if we think about our lives, our shortfalls, our failures, our failings, we have a million reasons to be humble.

But this is Jesus. This is the perfect, sinless one. This is the glorious Son of God.

This is the Lord of Lords. This is the King of Kings. This is the second person of the Trinity. Why does he have to humble himself?

[46 : 51] Why is he doing this? Why such comprehensive humility on the part of Jesus?

Well, the answer to that question, why is he doing this? The reason he is doing this is because of you and because of me. It's because he loves us.

It's because he wants to save us. And if you and I are to be saved, he must come down in order to lift us up.

And that's a really important point to be clear on. You and I cannot climb up into heaven. We cannot climb up.

We cannot scale some ladder to heaven. Jesus had to come down. We can't get to heaven by building up a portfolio of good works that we can try to trade with.

[48 : 00] We can't get to heaven by our good religion. We can't bring out a register and say, look at all the times I went to church. It's not like some ladder that we climb in order to get to the point of salvation.

We cannot climb up to heaven. We cannot get to God through some climb, some pursuit. No, Christ had to come down to save us.

Jesus had to humble himself. And we see that at the birth of Jesus. That humble birth.

We see that at the baptism of Jesus as he takes the baptism of repentance upon himself. And we see that even more at the cross of Jesus.

The place that the baptism was pointing towards. Paul in Philippians chapter 2 and verse 8 says of Jesus, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

[49 : 14] Even death on a cross. So we see here the humility. The breathtaking humility of Jesus.

And if we are to be saved, we need to humble ourselves. We need to come to Jesus as singing the words of our final hymn, nothing in my hands I bring.

simply to thy cross I claim. Naked, come to thee for dress.

Helpless, look to thee for grace. Foul, I to the fountain fly. Wash me, Savior, or I die.

Jesus humbled himself. We see the activity of Jesus. He goes to them. They don't come to him. That's how salvation works.

[50 : 28] He comes to us when we're not looking for him. The humility of Jesus. We see it so clearly in this passage.

And the third thing to note here is the charity of Jesus. Verse 15. Jesus answered him, that's John, let it be so now, for us it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

Then he, John, consented. So Matthew here, as he continues to record this account for us, he takes the camera and he zooms in.

We're seeing the crowds, we're seeing the Jordan, we're seeing all these people being baptized, and then the camera zooms in on Jesus as he steps forward. Then the camera zooms in even more.

And we see that Jesus having this conversation with John, and John is perplexed. John is trying to understand what's going on. John can't understand why Jesus is coming to him to be baptized.

[51 : 35] Because John's baptism, verse 11, if you note it, it's a baptism with water for repentance. And those who are being baptized, verse 6 tells us, they were confessing their sins.

So in baptism, the people who were coming were openly and publicly repenting. They were saying, I am a sinner and I want to be saved.

So this was a baptism for sinners. John had made that plain. All those who were coming to him were sinners. So why has Jesus been baptized?

That was John's question. Jesus never sinned. Jesus had nothing to repent of. So John can't understand why this is necessary.

John can't understand why Jesus is coming to him. Jesus, the sinless one, is coming to this place where sinners can be baptized. So what was Jesus doing? Well, at the beginning of his ministry, he was standing in the place of sinners.

[52 : 53] That's what he was doing. Weerspey says this, why was Jesus baptized? First, his baptism gave approval to John's ministry.

So Jesus is saying in being baptized, I approve this ministry. Listen to what John is saying. It's trustworthy. The second, says Weerspey, Jesus identified himself with publicans and sinners, the very people he came to save.

See, for sinners to become righteous, the righteous one had to become sin. And so in the Jordan River, we see a foreshadowing of 2 Corinthians 5.21.

It says there, for our sake, he, Jesus, made him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him, Jesus, we might become the righteousness of God.

This is what the scholars call the great exchange. Jesus takes our sin from us and in exchange he gives his righteousness, his salvation to us.

[54 : 10] How do we pay for this? We'll note the word and the point, charity. How do we pay for this? How do we pay for this righteousness, this salvation that's been given to us?

We don't pay for it. Jesus paid it all on the cross. That's where he became sin. That's where he paid the wages of our sin.

It was on the cross and when we believe that, when we go there by faith, the righteousness of Christ is transferred to us.

We become saved, we become righteous and the sin in us is transferred to him as he takes the curse of sin from us.

The moment we believe all that he has done already is affected in us. Our sin to him, his righteousness to us.

[55 : 21] How is this fair? It's not fair. It's charity. It's God's charity. It's the grace of Jesus offered to us.

And it's the only way we can be saved. We don't like to think of ourselves, do we, as charity cases.

We'd much rather pay our own way. We'd much rather earn enough good works to take us to heaven in our own strength.

We'd much rather do something that will persuade God to accept us. We don't like to be charity cases, but when it comes to salvation, we are charity cases.

we can't pay our own way. There's nothing that we can do that will open the gates of heaven.

[56 : 35] We can't do anything to save ourselves, but the charity of God, the grace of God, the love of God, the salvation of God is offered to us in Jesus.

We just have to believe. We just have to accept that charity in Christ. Think of yourself.

Walk down the street in Glasgow or Edinburgh and we see all these people and they're just sitting at the side of the pavement.

They're not working. And I'm not going into the reasons why all that is the way it is, but there are people who sit on the streets, they're not working, they have their hands out and they receive charity.

That's you and that's me when it comes to salvation. There's nothing we can do. There's no work that will satisfy God.

[57 : 43] There's no thing that we can do that will open the gates of heaven. We just have to open our hands and say, have mercy on me. Please give me your grace.

Look upon me in love. Give me charity. Remember the prodigal son? This is not just the way that we're saved. This is the way that we return when we've been wandering.

Remember the prodigal son? He's a million miles away in a far off land and he realizes the state he's in. He begins to head back to his father.

He has his speech all worked out and he fully intends to say to his father, I can't be your son anymore but I'll be your worker. I'll labor for you. And the father says put your speech away.

No work. You're not going to be a servant. You're my son. And I give you grace. The charity of Jesus.

[58 : 54] Have we received that charity? Have we received that grace? It's humiliating. It's humbling. But it's the only way we can come.

You cannot get through the gates of heaven with pride. We cannot get through the gates of heaven saying, look at what I am doing. Look at my good works.

Look at all the stuff, God. Please accept me on the basis of this. Jesus says, throw it all away. It's my grace or nothing.

It's my charity or nothing. The charity of Jesus, the activity of Jesus, the humility of Jesus, finally, the identity of Jesus.

And this is just a very brief, I'll give you the point and no more. It leads us into the rest of the gospel. And when Jesus was baptized, verse 16, immediately he went up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened to him and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest in him.

[60 : 06] And behold, a voice from heaven said, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. And so the question that Matthew is answering in this gospel is the question, who is Jesus?

that's the most important question that anyone can ask. Because if Jesus is just a man, even if he's an exceptional man, even if he's a top-rate prophet, even if he's a genius-level philosopher, if he's just a man, then the humility of Jesus and the charity of Jesus and the activity of Jesus has no great effect beyond his lifetime.

there's no impact on our lives if he's just a man. But if Jesus is God the Son, everything changes.

If Jesus is God the Son, the humility of Jesus, the charity of Jesus, the grace of Jesus, the activity of Jesus becomes the solid ground for our salvation.

So Matthew here, he's talking about the identity, the last point though. He's talking about the identity of Jesus. And Matthew is making clear as he records this episode that Jesus is God the Son.

[61 : 38] He's the God-man. See, only a man can take our sin from us. And so Jesus is fully man.

He's born into a real historical family line. Matthew gives us the details of it in Matthew 1. He's saying to us, this is a man. This is flesh.

Jesus is a man, and he had to be a man in order to take our sin from us. But only God can give salvation to us. And Jesus is fully God.

And so Matthew records for us that as Jesus is baptized in the Jordan, the heavens open. And God the Father and God the Holy Spirit bear witness to the fact that Jesus is God the Son.

That's his identity. Not a man, not a teacher, not a philosopher, not a miracle maker in the making, but he is God the Son. That's his identity.

[62 : 47] J.C. Ryle says this as we finish. We are told of the presence of all three people of the blessed Trinity. God the Son, manifest in the flesh, is baptized.

God the Spirit descends like a dove and lights upon him. God the Father speaks from heaven with a voice. In a word, we have the manifested presence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Ryle says, surely we may regard this as a public announcement that the work of Christ was the result of the eternal councils of all three. It was said the whole Trinity, which at the beginning of creation said, let us make man.

man. And it was the whole Trinity, says Ryle, again, which at the beginning of the gospel seemed to say, let us save man.

So who is Jesus? He is God the Son. He is the Savior. And Matthew is asking, is he your Savior?

[64 : 04] Is he your Savior? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for your Son. We thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit who shows us, who shows us Jesus, who shows us what he did for us.

And we ask that if we see it, that today we would come to him. For any who are not yet Christians, for any who may still be trying to hold up their own good works, for any who may be saying to you, am I good enough in myself?

Help them to see that we come with nothing in our hands. We simply are to come clinging to the cross of Jesus, receiving the charity, the grace of Jesus.

We pray that someone might even do that in this place today. And for any who may be far away in the far off land, help them, help each one of us to see that all we are to do is to come back, not trying to earn our way back, not trying to climb our way back, but help us to come thankful for and receiving of the grace of Jesus.

[65 : 28] us. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. 582 in Mission Praise finish rock of ages cleft for me.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever.

[68 : 40] Amen.