

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Son of David, Lord of All

Scripture: Mark 12:35-37

Code: 41-64

Let's open the Word of God, back to the twelfth chapter of Mark, and so grateful that you are here tonight to keep the flow going in this section of Mark's gospel. I want to read from verse 35 just through verse 37. It's a brief portion of Scripture but it has very, very far-reaching implications.

“And Jesus began to say, as He taught in the temple, how is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, the Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.’ David himself calls Him Lord. So in what sense is He His son? And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.”

This very brief but highly impactful conversation that our Lord has on Wednesday of Passion Week in the temple as He teaches, addresses the most important and foundational reality of His ministry and that is His identity. Who is He? Who is this man Jesus? And is He in fact the Messiah? And is He even more than that, the Son of God, God incarnate?

That, of course, is essential and foundational to faith in Him. Now the Jews of history, including the Jews of today, have widely held the same view concerning Messiah, that Messiah would be a man and no more than a man. Messiah was to be an earthly ruler, a man of immense unparalleled power and influence and impact and might. He was nonetheless to be a man. He would rise to conquer all of Israel's enemies and He would then accomplish the fulfillment of all the promises that were given to Abraham, passed on to Abraham's children and reiterated and expanded in the promises that were given David of a coming King and Kingdom. All of the promises of the Old Testament that are sort of grounded in the Abrahamic Covenant and expanded in the Davidic Covenant are tied to the arrival of this man who is the Messiah, or the Christ. Christ meaning Messiah.

Again to say it so that you understand, they assumed and they believed that the Messiah would be a human being and nothing more, that He would yield power that was beyond any king that the world had ever seen. There are plenty of promises in the Old Testament about the extent of and the duration of the Kingdom of Messiah that transcend all other historic rulers. They did not necessarily see the Messiah as a Savior of individual souls. They saw Messiah as the Savior of His people, the Jews. They did not, nor do they now view Messiah as God in human flesh. He is in the minds of Jews, a man and that was the reality that brought them into a direct collision with Jesus because Jesus claimed to be more than a man. As we know by going through this portion of Mark, the religious leaders of Israel hated Jesus. They hated Him with fiery resentment. They hated Him for His

assault on their theology, their hypocrisy, His attack on their operation in the temple. They hated Him for His influence which diminished theirs in the eyes of the people. They hated Him for publicly denouncing them, publicly exposing their corruption and their hypocrisy and basically presenting a divine view of true religion that was in opposition to theirs.

But on top of all of that for which they hated Him, they hated Him for being a blasphemer because He made Himself equal to God. He said things like, "I and the Father are one." Like, "I work and My Father works." They never misunderstood His claim. They knew He claimed to be God. In fact, His entire ministry was driven in the direction of a conclusion that John articulates at the end of his gospel in words that are familiar to us. "These four gospels have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God." He is the Messiah but He is more than a man who is the anointed King, He is also God the Son."

Now the Jews believed, and some still believe, that the Messiah would not only be a man, but that He would be a man descendent from David, that He would be a man not only descendant from David, but somewhat David-like, in that like David He would defeat Israel's foes and bring about a glorious Kingdom fulfillment. They certainly didn't believe that Jesus was the fulfillment of that Messianic hope.

In fact, if you go back to chapter 11 and verse 27, as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?" And what they are referring to is what He has just done which is throw them out of the temple and denounce them as a group of robbers who had turned the temple area into a cave of robbers, a cave of corruption.

When they say to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things?" they are affirming for us the fact that they didn't believe that He was that Messiah. "What gives You the right to do what You're doing? What gives You the right to claim what You're claiming? Who are You to declare on us that this is a den of robbers? And who are You to say that this is what belongs to Your Father and You know what Your Father wants and we don't?"

They are not convinced that He is the Messiah. And they really had to fight to hold on to that belief because He had to get past the explosion of miracles that He did which could only be described as those being done by the power of God, even if they believed He was merely a man, they would have had to admit that the power of God came through Him in unparalleled fashion. There had been men in the Old Testament through whom God had done miraculous things. And even the Apostles were men through whom God did miraculous things. But no one ever had been able to be such a force of power over disease and demons and death and nature as this man.

So they fought hard to sustain their conviction that He is not the Messiah. That then becomes the issue here. Now remember, this is Wednesday during Passion Week. Jesus is in the temple and He's

teaching concerning the Kingdom and preaching the gospel and He's being confronted by the Sanhedrin, they come in waves, first the Pharisees with the Herodians, then the Sadducees and as we saw this morning, then another representative of the Pharisees, a scribe who confronts Him with a third question. He answers every question and they are left stunned and without an ability to entrap Him and turn the crowd against Him and raise the rancor of the Romans against Him as well. And they're finished. The end of verse 34, "No one ventured to ask Him any more questions. He thwarted all their attempts."

Now He takes the initiative and in verse 35, "And Jesus began to say as He taught in the temple..." Now He goes from answering their questions to asking His own. The tables are now turned. And by the way, this is His final conversation personally with the religious leaders of Israel. It's the last word and the last word that Jesus has to say to these leaders who are responsible to disseminate divine truth to the rest of the nation, the last word that He has to say to them is a word concerning His identity, to demonstrate that He is in fact the Messiah who is a man but not merely a man who is also Lord. We can entitle this passage, "David's Son and David's Lord." Final testimony from Jesus as to His identity is absolutely critical.

I would like to suggest then that verse 35 is a final invitation...it is a final invitation. It is an invitation that I think in part is prompted by a statement He made in verse 34 in the immediate preceding discussion with the scribe. He said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God...You are not far from the Kingdom of God." He said that to him because the man understood that the issues with regard to the Kingdom were spiritual issues, heart issues, internal issues not external behaviors and sacrifices and ceremonies. So He knew at least one of them was not far from the Kingdom of God. Here if nothing more is an invitation for the one who is not far to actually come near, and the next step would be, of course, to embrace Christ for who He is. To be saved, one must believe in the truth concerning the person of Jesus Christ. You cannot be wrong about your Christology and receive the gift of salvation.

Even after all the hatred expressed from the leaders, even after all the superficial interest of the fickle crowd, even after all the efforts to entrap Him, feeling the rancor and the hatred coming His way from these leaders, He is still and He is always the compassionate evangelist, inviting sinners headed for hell, leaders and people, to reconsider who He is. And here we have a final invitation. One more moment in which they can cease their open rejection, or their indecision, and for one scribe he can go from being not far to coming all the way to the Kingdom.

He had confronted them, as you know, with the strongest rebukes. He had publicly shamed the leaders for their deception, their hypocrisy, their deadly influence, their lies, but at the same time He has laid out these indictments against them, He still manifests concern for them to know and believe the truth concerning Him which is the only way of salvation. Scripture says that the Lord has no pleasure in the damnation of the wicked. As we know, the joy of God is in the salvation of sinners, the

sadness of God is related to their destruction. In Luke 19 Jesus looks at Jerusalem and sees the impenitent city and He wept....He wept. His heart is burdened, His heart is broken.

In the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, do you remember how the father turned to invite the older brother to come to the celebration? That's the heart of God toward Jewish legalists, Pharisees who have rejected Him.

Now not all of the Pharisees, not all of them were equally evil. Not all of the scribes were equally evil. Not all of the leaders permanently rejected Christ. I say that because it's important to know that where an invitation is extended, a response could be expected. Where the Lord gives an invitation, His Spirit may move to produce the very response the invitation calls for. Illustration...Luke 23:50, a man named Joseph who was a member of the Sanhedrin, a member of the council, a good and righteous man, he had not consented to their plan and action, a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews who was waiting for the Kingdom of God, this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Now having said that, I have to say he's rare...extremely rare. Our Lord then is asking a question, it's very unlike theirs. They asked questions for ill-conceived motives. They asked questions to set traps. They asked questions for disastrous consequences. Our Lord asks the question with a positive purpose, with a saving objective, to reach out one final time. And here's the question, verse 35, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?"

If you compare this with the parallel passage in Matthew, and there is also a parallel to this in Luke's gospel as well, in Luke chapter 20. But if you go to Matthew, the conversation kind of if you can put it all together unfolds like this, Jesus begins, according to Matthew 22:41, by saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Who's Son is He? What do you think about the Messiah?," Christ meaning Messiah. "Whose Son is He?"

The form of the question doesn't direct attention immediately at Him, it's simply asking to identify the Messiah and whose son He is to be, the anointed one. Well they respond in Matthew, "David's." They all say He is to be David's son. He has to be in the line from David.

And our Lord affirms that here when we pick up the conversation in Mark, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? Why do you keep coming up with David? Why is that your answer, because you've been taught by the scribes and they tell us that that's the correct answer, why. Why is it that they say that the Christ is David's son?"

And the question is really a loaded question because what He means by that is this, how is it that the scribes say that the Christ is only the Son of David? How is it that they say He is the son of David and nothing more? That's the implication.

And this opens up for us the fundamentally wrong conception of the Messiah with which they were dealing, that He was a man, a gifted man, a great leader, a military man, a man of might, influence, power, etc., etc. And that was all to be true but that wasn't the complete answer.

You remember back in Matthew 16 when Jesus said to the disciples, "Who do men say that I am? 'Some say You're Elijah, they replied, some say You're Jeremiah, one of the prophets.' Who do you say that I am? And Peter speaking for the rest by the inspiration of God says, 'You're the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" That's the full answer to the question. Whose son is He? He is David's Son and He is God's Son. They had an incomplete understanding so the final invitation allows the surfacing of what you could call the final misconception. All they had as an answer was David...David's Son, this is what the scribes said.

Where did the scribes get that? Well they would have gotten it out of 2 Samuel chapter 7 verses 12 and 13 in the great promise of the Davidic Covenant where the Lord says that there will come a great Son of David, not Solomon but a far-greater son of David who will have an everlasting Kingdom and that is the promise of the Messiah to be a Son of David. You need to read Psalm 89. Psalm 89 clearly indicates that the Messiah is to be a Son of David. You see it in Amos 9:11, Micah 5:2, even Ezekiel 37:24 to 27, so they knew their Old Testament. And this is common knowledge with the people.

Just a little bit of a look at Matthew for a moment. We'll show you how that commonly people expected the Messiah to come through the line of David. As Jesus went through His ministry, you remember there were people who were ill, they needed healing and they would come to Him. In the ninth chapter of Matthew we read about an incident in which two blind men follow Him in verse 27, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." They mean by that Messiah, Son of David then becomes a synonym for identifying the Messiah. Jesus had demonstrated Himself to have divine power and there were many among the people who looked to Him as the one most hopeful to be the Messiah. In fact, if you go to chapter 12, you see in verse 22 a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, being brought to Jesus. He healed him so that the mute man spoke and saw. All the crowds were amazed and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can He?"

So you can see they don't even refer to the Messiah as the Messiah. They refer to Him as the Son of David. That title is actually synonymous in their minds, the final, ultimate, long-anticipated Son of David.

Jesus went in chapter 15 of Matthew, into the district of Tyre and Sidon. This is in Gentile territory. And a Canaanite woman came out and began to cry out saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David." There's a woman outside the borders of Israel who even views Him with this Messianic reality and identifies Him by the title, "Son of David." Two blind men on the road coming up from Jericho to Jerusalem, chapter 20 verse 30, "Lord have mercy on us, Son of David." And when He comes into

the city in Matthew 21:9, the crowds were saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

So you get the picture. He is viewed as the Son of David. That's the messianic title. So that was simply to clarify for you, the people universally understood that the Messiah was to be David's Son...David's Son.

Why do I make a point out of this? Because it's very important to say this, Matthew goes to great length to prove this is true. He does it in his genealogy. Matthew's genealogy in the first chapter of Matthew, which is right at the start of the New Testament, is the record of the genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of David. And it traces His lineage from Abraham through David, down through His father, Joseph, His earthly father, not the father of His birth but the father of His legal identity as a son. Luke also makes a critical point out of this in the third chapter of Luke. He gives us the genealogy of Mary. And the genealogy of Mary is also in the line of David, so that Jesus' earthly father was in the line of David and Jesus' mother herself was a descendent of David.

Jesus then fits the necessary feature of the messianic lineage. He is legally David's son. He is in the Davidic line, both sides of His family. Now there could not have been a more successful attack on the identity of Jesus than to prove that He was not a descendent of David. If they had been able to do that, it would have ended everything.

And by the way, all the genealogical records were kept in the temple. And so the religious leaders and the Sanhedrin would be the caretakers of those records. You can be sure those records were examined very carefully. The scribes themselves kept the records with great care.

Pure ancestry couldn't be claimed, it had to be proven for a man to exercise any kind of civic rights. Every Israelite knew his tribe, knew his ancestry, his forefathers. It could be easily examined as to the lineage of the father and mother of Jesus and they would have found that He indeed was a son of David. As I said, if they could have disproven that, it would have ended all claims that Jesus had to be the Messiah.

So their answer is correct in the sense that He is the Son of David, but it is inadequate. It comes short of the full picture. It doesn't go far enough. Frankly, David had many sons. And there would have been many people alive throughout Jewish history and even many people alive at the very time of Jesus who were descendants of David. You can understand that, right? By the time you spread out from David, there are lots of folks who can trace their line back to David.

How is He then to be distinguished from all of the many who that have come out of the loins of David? Davidic descent is only one mark, there must be more. And so the final invitation leads to the final misconception which brings us to the final exposition in which our Lord answers the very question that they must now be pondering in their minds. Verse 3, David himself said in the Holy Spirit, "The Lord

said to my Lord, sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.” David himself calls Him Lord, and so in what sense is he his son? Our Lord was an expository preacher, this is an exposition of Psalm 110...Psalm 110 verse 1 is here recorded. “The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet, or make Your enemies Your footstool.”

It's not enough to say the Messiah is the Son of David. Why is it not enough? Because David refers to Him as Lord. If Messiah is only a man, how can David call Him Lord? How can He be David's Son and David's Lord?

Now look at that statement, “The Lord said to My Lord.” The Father is speaking to the Son who is David's Lord, the one who will be exalted to reign and under whose feet all enemies will be placed. David himself calls Him Lord.

Now Lord is *kurios*, the Hebrew equivalent would be *Adonay*. It's a title for God used throughout the Old Testament. David calls Him “My Lord.” You say, “Well maybe David was just mistaken.” No, look back at verse 36, “David himself said...what's the next phrase?...in the Holy Spirit...in the Holy Spirit.” Even Matthew 22:43, the parallel, says, “In the Spirit, in the Holy Spirit.”

The idea is that when David called the Messiah Lord, he was speaking by inspiration from the Holy Spirit. So David, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, calls Messiah Christ his descendant, his son to come, Lord. That's Psalm 110:1, “The Lord said to my Lord.” *Yahweh* speaks to the one who is my Lord, who is the one who is my Lord, the one who will be set on a throne and the enemies placed beneath His feet. That's a messianic description.

The Jews had always acknowledged, and this is important. The Jews had historically always acknowledged that Psalm 110 was a messianic Psalm. That had never been debated in ancient times. And by the way, it is the most often quoted Psalm by the New Testament writers. It is quoted more than any other Psalm. It is quoted by Peter in Acts 2, by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, a couple of times by the writer of Hebrews. In all three gospels this Psalm is attributed to David by Jesus. So when it says “My Lord,” it is David identifying the Messiah as his Lord. Our Lord's use of this Psalm and is significant, it is a messianic Psalm.

So strong was this Psalm in Jewish tradition as to its messianic identity, that in the early church the Jews had a problem with it cause Christians started applying that Psalm to Christ, as the New Testament writers do. The Jews then, for hundreds of years, abandoned the messianic view, they changed their interpretation of Psalm 110 and some of the rabbis applied it to Abraham and some applied it to Melchizedek and some later even applied it to Judas Maccabees. Others applied it to other rulers or even some priests. And some rabbis in fits of manipulation rearranged the Hebrew to create acrostics to give it other meanings. Anything to get Jesus out of that Psalm. It is a messianic Psalm. They acknowledge it as a messianic Psalm. It is oft quoted in the New Testament many parts

of that Psalm are connected to the work and the person of Christ. And what did *Yahweh* say to David's Lord? "Sit at My right hand till I put Your enemies under Your feet."

David, who wrote the Psalm, is saying that God Himself, the *Yahweh* of Israel, creator of the universe, God a very God, the one true God has designated a position for Messiah...listen...at His own right hand. Sit at My right hand. God gives to Messiah the place at His right hand. God identifies the Messiah as Lord, taking a place at the right hand of God makes Him co-equal in rank and co-equal in authority and virtually declares His deity. Literally, present imperative, "Take Your permanent seat." *Yahweh's* right hand is His power. There's not actually a chair there, it is a way of saying He is in the place of divine power.

Many Old Testament passages assign the power of God to the right hand of God. To be placed permanently at the right hand of God is to be placed in the position of power and authority to the max. That is why Philippians 2 says that He was exalted, given a name above every name and that is the name Lord. And at that name, everyone is to bow. That is why in Ephesians 1 it says He is the Lord over all things, over all things who has then been given to the church as the church's head.

His enemies become His footstool. His enemies become His footstool. There's further explanation of that in Psalm 2 which is a messianic Psalm, verse 9...well, verse 8, "We'll give You nations as Your inheritance, the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and shatter them like earthenware." You're going to crush Your enemies.

So what we see here is a picture of the one who will take the throne beside God and take the rule and crush God's enemies. He is a Son of David by Old Testament testimony, but He is also David's Lord. This is the God/Man, this is the incomprehensible, infinite mystery of the person of Jesus Christ, David's Son, and David's Lord, born a man in the line of David and yet He is the Lord of David, no Middle Eastern father would ever call a son of his Lord. This is completely and utterly unique. He is David's Son and He is David's Lord.

The deity of Christ then is the issue here. And the Lord goes to a Psalm that they all confess was a messianic Psalm and shows them by that very Psalm where David points to the one who would reign that not only will He be a man who reigns and rules, but He will rise to the very right-hand of God and be an expression Himself of the divine nature. Certainly the New Testament overflows, doesn't it?, with evidences of the fact that He was God. He shared with God the mutual attributes of omnipotence. He claimed to be the creator, the commander of the elements, the commander of all creatures, the provider of food, the healer, the raiser of the dead, the forgiver of sin and the judge of all. He had the attributes of omnipresence, thus was able to be everywhere at all times. He was omniscient, He knew everything, even what was going on in the minds of men. He was holy, true, wise, sovereign, loving, eternal, glorious. He possessed all the attributes of God, put them all on display. He accepted worship. In fact, He demanded worship. He was to be sought in prayer, as the

source of answered prayer and the one who opened the resources of God to pour out blessing on His people. Everything He said was to be believed as the truth of God. And He was to be believed on for salvation.

He took the titles of God...Rock, Stone, Savior, Redeemer, Holy One, Lord of Hosts, King, First and Last, Light, Law-giver, all Old Testament titles for God that Jesus attributed to Himself. Absolutely, unequivocally the testimony of the four gospels is that He is Lord. That then becomes the confession which saves. Romans 10:9, "If you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead," that's the faith element in His work which assumes the cross. But more importantly, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord. He is Lord."

Think about it this way. If God became a man, we would expect His human life to be sinless. And Jesus was. The uniform testimony of friends and enemies is the sinlessness, the blamelessness, the faultlessness of Jesus, no one could find any fault in Him from the beginning to the end of His life. And the testimony of God sums it up, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." And God had the highest standard which our Lord never violated. He had no capacity to sin.

Let's be hypothetical again. If God were a man, we would expect Him to live perfectly, to live righteously, to live in a holy fashion. That's the positive side. No sin, but the overwhelming evidence of the presence of perfection, righteousness, purity, devotion to God. And you look at Jesus, and that's what you see. Love for God, communion with God, a desire to honor God, to please God, "I only do what I see My Father do, what My Father tells Me to do, what pleases My Father." Perfect illustration of sinlessness and a perfect illustration, perfect model of piety, devotion to God.

If God hypothetically were a man, we would expect His words to be the greatest words that were ever spoken. There can be no argument there. Jesus' words were and even those who didn't agree with Him said, "Never a man spoke like this Man." His teaching, as we've seen His answers to the questions that were posed to Him, left people dumbfounded at His profound wisdom and perfect knowledge. If God were a man, we would expect Him to exert a profound power over His creation. Jesus did that. Every aspect of it...the material, the spiritual, the supernatural.

If God were a man, we would expect then many supernatural acts. Jesus controlled nature, healed people, walked on water, ended funerals, demonstrated transcendent glory in the Transfiguration, you know the litany of things that put this on display.

And there may be one other thing to think about in a hypothetical sense, if God were a man, we would expect Him to manifest the attributes of God. And they're all there in Christ...the love of God, the mercy of God, the grace of God, we see magnificently in Christ.

All of these come together to attest the fact that the Messiah is Christ who is not only David's Son, but who is also David's Lord. What a magnificent exposition. And our Lord forces them to live with their own interpretation. You've always said it was a messianic Psalm. And David was referring in the Psalm to the Messiah who would reign and rule. Let me push you on that. David called Him, that One who would rule, My Lord and David described His rule as rule from the right hand of the power of God.

Well, the best that can be said about it, "A large crowd enjoyed listening to Him." That's really pathetic, isn't it? Don't you wish it had said, "The large crowd fell on their faces in the presence of the incarnate God?"

The leaders were done. Matthew adds a postscript. Matthew 22:46, "No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question." That clammed up the leaders. And Mark simply says, "The crowds enjoyed listening to Him." Either way, you're going to end up in hell. You might be entertained by Jesus and that's as deadly and damning as hating Him. This masterful exposition of Psalm 110, and where's the repentance? And where's the faith? And where's the affirmation of who He is? It's going to even get worse.

Judas was there, he heard all that. Chapter 14 verse 10, "Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the Chief Priests in order to betray Him to them." Inconceivable, isn't it? How can you be in the face of all of that, hear all of that, and then go sell Jesus for money, knowing the people are going to kill Him?

Chapter 14 verse 43, "While He was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came up accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who were from the Chief Priests and the scribes and the elders." Now they're amassing to arrest Him.

Verse 53 of chapter 14, "They led Jesus away to the High Priest and all the Chief Priests and elders and scribes gathered together."

Chapter 15 verse 1, "Early in the morning, the Chief Priests with the elders and scribes and the whole council immediately held a consultation and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate."

The ending is so tragic from the standpoint of these people. A final invitation, an effort to overturn a final misconception with a final exposition of a pertinent text had no real impact on the leaders at all. They were so resolute in their hatred, so profoundly deep in the darkness of their own sin that they couldn't see the light when it was shining in front of them.

At this moment, and we'll see this in our next message in Mark, at this moment, verse 38, He turns to the crowd and He says, "Beware of the scribes...beware of the scribes. They're going to lead you to hell."

Sometimes people like to assume that being religious is a noble thing, being the leader in the false religion, whatever false religion you pick, is to be more closely associated with Satan than those who are utterly irreligious, because Satan disguises himself as...what?...angel of light. They were the agents of hell who produced the sons of hell. And there He was and they couldn't see the darkness of their hearts. The love of sin, the love of self-pride, self-satisfaction in religion, damning reality. And Jesus says, "Beware, people, beware of these leaders."

Beware of anybody who ever leads you to a wrong view of Christ. I don't care if it's a Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, the Muslims, the Buddhists...and we heard about that tonight. Any religion that has a skewed view of Jesus Christ is deadly, and I mean in an internal sense. "These things are written that you may know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and that you may believe on His name and by believing have eternal life." If you don't get Christ right, you can't have eternal life. You have to believe the truth concerning Him.

Father, it's been a wonderful evening, tonight, to worship and fellowship and enjoy the evidences of Your grace in the lives of these folks who have given testimony. We thank You for the simplicity of Scripture. We thank You, Lord, for the clarity of it. There are many who would say that the Bible is too hard to understand and they're so many different interpretations, how can we know what it means? But when you just read it and look at it and open your heart to it, its meaning unfolds so clearly and so wonderfully. And in that truth comes life, by that truth comes blessing. Your Word is our life, Your Word is our bread. It is our soul satisfaction. It is also our message. We take in the truth for our own soul's benefit, we give out the truth for the benefit of others. May we be faithful in regard to these things. We ask, Lord, that You would use this wonderful congregation to be a force of people in this community, in this city, and even beyond for the true understanding of Christ. The first question that has to be answered correctly in any gospel presentation is who is Jesus Christ? Who is this One? The God/Man? A Man...yes, a Son of David., but also David's Lord and the One who is forever seated as the power of God on the very throne of God, God Himself.

What wondrous reality this is and how simply and clearly explained to us. I pray, Lord, that You would draw to Yourself any in our midst who have not come to faith in Christ. I pray, Lord, that You would break the barriers that stand between them and repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus. Clear out the darkness and misunderstanding. Bring the light of truth, the light of life. May the darkness be shattered. May the barriers be broken. And may the souls of such persons be flooded with the true knowledge of Christ that comes when Your Spirit provides that truth. Do that, Lord, as You said, "Let there be light in the act of creation. May You speak light into darkened souls, even tonight, that they may see the glorious truth of Christ and receive His salvation.

Thank You for all that You have done in our lives, those of us who know You and love You and serve You. And we would ask that You would enable us to be a continual blessing and to be useful to You in the days ahead.

In particularly we think about this week, Lord, as so many of us will be interacting with people coming from all over the world. We just pray, Lord, that Your will be will accomplished and that You would achieve things that just can't be explained humanly at all, that things will happen that can't be explained by the speakers or the church or the people involved, but can only be explained by the power that comes from You. Do a great work, this week. We thank You for what we expect will happen, and rejoice in anticipation of that.

And now, Lord, we pray as we go, we might do so with joy and that we might return again to this place where corporately we come together to worship You. We don't leave You and You don't leave us, but we leave empowered, encouraged, stimulated to love and good works by the fellowship we enjoy and we thank You for the privilege in Christ's name. Amen.

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