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

Characteristics of Jesus' Divinity, Part 1
Scripture: Luke 5:1-11
Code: 42-61

Open your Bible to the fifth chapter of the gospel of Luke...the gospel of Luke. We embark upon the next chapter in this wonderful and thrilling account of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ who is indeed Immanuel, God in human flesh.

Some years ago there was a book entitled The Quest for the Historical Jesus. That book offered itself as a scholarly, academic, scholastic attempt to bring together all of the diverse elements of legend and theology and history to try to find in the midst of the maze of viewpoints the real Jesus. A similar effort was made earlier this year by Peter Jennings on the ABC network in a lengthy special called "The Search for the Real Jesus."

Through the years scholars have made what is essentially a hypocritical effort to find Jesus apart from the one place where He can be found. While on the one hand denying the veracity of Scripture, denying the authority of the Bible, denying the inspiration of the New Testament, they attempt to find Jesus when, in fact, the only historical record available of Jesus is to be found on the pages of the New Testament. To disdain the New Testament, to deny the truthfulness of the New Testament and then to attempt to find Jesus is utterly futile and hypocritical.

If you want to find the historical Jesus, He can be found easily. Just read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. There are four verifiable, historical records of the life of Jesus Christ. Not only are they verifiable historically, not only are they accurate when you compare them but they are inspired by God Himself so that every word is in fact true. You cannot on the one hand reject the only true record of Jesus and then purport on some scholastic level to try to find the real Jesus all the while looking in places where that information is not available. It's not really very difficult to find the historical Jesus, all you have to do is read the New Testament, the four gospels. We're looking at one of those gospels which reveals to us the true story of Jesus. The historical Jesus is found in this document called the gospel of Luke, this historical record of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

It is the lengthiest of the four gospels, as we are learning. It takes a while to get through Luke. And it is a large treatment of the history of Jesus and when you add it to Matthew, Mark and John, you have a relatively significant body of truth, lengthy. And while Luke, as I said, is the longest of the gospels, it doesn't take the whole gospel of Luke to get its message across. In fact, I would venture to say that you could discover the real Jesus in almost any paragraph in Luke that you want to choose. In fact, in just the text we have today, chapter 5 verses 1 through 11, there's enough information here to

know exactly who Jesus is. It is very clear in these verses that He is human, that He is a man. He walks like a man and talks like a man and acts like a man and is accepted as human by all the people around Him.

But it is also very evident in these very same eleven verses that open the fifth chapter that He is more than just a man, that, in fact, He is God. If all you had was Luke 5:1 to 11, you would have enough to know the nature of Jesus Christ. You would have enough to understand the ministry of Jesus Christ as well. This is a profound incident in His life that is revealing as to His essence as God. And so while you have the whole body of the four gospels, and while you have the lengthy gospel of Luke, you're not dependent on all of that information to make the case. As I said, any one paragraph might do it, certainly this paragraph is enough, is sufficient to indicate to us who Jesus Christ really is. And it is in the unique setting of a fishing incident that this revelation takes place and takes place unmistakably. One cannot with any objectivity or honesty read these verses and conclude anything other than that Jesus is in fact God. We could say then that the deity of Jesus is the manifest theme of the opening verses of chapter 5. His deity is made evident in the unfolding story that takes place on the shore of the Lake of Galilee in a fishing incident.

Let me read the verses to you and then we'll begin to look at them. "Now it came about that while the multitude were pressing around Him and listening to the Word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; the fishermen had gotten out of them, and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the multitudes from the boat. And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' And Simon answered and said, 'Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at Your bidding I will let down the nets.' And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish; and their nets began to break; and they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!' For amazement had seized him and all his companions because the catch of fish which they had taken. And so also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.' And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him."

What did happen that day was convincing enough that they left everything to follow Jesus. The drama of this scene literally changed the rest of the lives of these disciples. Here is the divine fisherman. Five divine attributes are manifest here. When you think about the nature of God, you think about the attributes of God, what is true or characteristic of God's nature, those are the very things you see here. For example, one of the attributes of God's nature is truth. God is truth and always truth. Another of the attributes of God's nature is omniscience. God knows everything that exists, everything that exists in the material world and everything that exists in the immaterial world.

Thirdly, God is not only the source of veracity, God is not only the source of truth, He is the source also of knowledge and the source of power, thirdly. When you think about God you think of power, Almighty God, all powerful God. Another of God's attributes is holiness. God is holy, holy, holy. And another of His attributes is mercy. God is by nature merciful.

When you look at Jesus in this simple fishing incident that occurred this day in Galilee, what you see here in Christ is the very essential character of God. You see divine truth. You see divine omniscience. You see divine power or omnipotence. You see divine holiness. And you see divine mercy. Here then is the manifest nature of God visible in Jesus Christ. So I say that one doesn't need the four gospels, one doesn't need even the full gospel of Luke. These verses alone are sufficient to indicate who Jesus really is. He must be God because He is the source of truth, omniscience, omnipotence, holiness and mercy. All these characteristics are manifest in Christ.

Let's look at the first one and it appears right away in the account, verses 1 to 3. We see the manifestation of divine truth in Jesus. Verse 1, "It came about that while the multitude were pressing around Him and listening to the Word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret." Now we'll stop there for a moment.

The verse opens with an indefinite indicator, "it came about." It doesn't tell us when, it doesn't tell us how much time has transpired since the incidents that occurred in the prior chapter. You remember in chapter 4 He had preached in the synagogue in Capernaum and He had cast a demon out of a man there, that was His first miracle, the first one recorded by Luke. And then, you'll remember, He went after the synagogue service home to the house of Simon where His mother-in-law was ill and He healed his mother-in-law of a very great infection that had produced a high fever. And then at the end of the Sabbath day the people in the city were bringing everybody who was sick with every imaginable disease and He was healing them all and He was casting demons out of many. That all occurred on one day in the synagogue in Capernaum and in the home of Peter.

We have an indefinite then passing of time. We don't exactly know what the chronology is, but it came about at some point in time after that. Jesus is still in Galilee. He's still preaching. He's still calling disciples. He's still performing these healings and casting out demons. And on one occasion when surrounded by a multitude, He is near the lake of Gennesaret teaching the Word of God.

Now you need to know as I pointed out briefly last time that Jesus is beginning to collect massive crowds. There are a lot of ways to collect a crowd. A really good way to collect a crowd is to promise people that you can heal them all. I always am amazed when I turn on the television program and I see these healers on the Christian channel filling up these stadiums. Doesn't it amaze you? Ten thousand people, fifteen thousand, twenty thousand people packing in? If you promise you can heal people, you can draw a crowd.

Well, if you can really do it you can really draw a crowd. If you could actually heal. If it weren't just some kind of false advertising, if you could really heal you could draw a crowd. And that's exactly what happened with Jesus. He could heal all the people who came to Him of any and every disease, do it instantaneously and do it permanently. And that's exactly what He was doing and consequently the crowd was exploding. In verse 14 of chapter 4, "The news about Him was spreading throughout the surrounding district, and as the word went that He could heal and control not only disease but control the world of demons, the crowd would get larger and larger." And if you track through the book of Luke, chapter 5 verse 19, chapter 6 verse 19, chapter 8 verse 4, chapter 8 verse 40, come into chapter 9 verse 11, that remarkable verse in chapter 12 verse 1 that says the crowd was so big the people were stepping on each other, chapter 13 verses 14 and 17, chapter 14 verse 25, you just march all the way through and the crowds get bigger and bigger, massive crowds of people. You begin to get the picture that when Jesus was teaching He drew huge crowds because of His power and because of the clarity and the uniqueness and the power of His preaching.

Remember what I told you about the incident when He was in Nazareth when He was in the synagogue, the people said they had never heard any teacher like Him. A good communicator can draw a crowd. A great preacher can draw a crowd. Jesus was the greatest communicator, the clearest preacher that ever walked on the earth. And in a day when there was no media, speakers drew huge crowds if they were gifted communicators and orators. There never was anybody who could communicate the way Jesus could. Noone had such clarity of thought. Noone had such grasp of the language. Noone had such precision in presenting truth. Noone could grasp the perfect illustration for the perfect point the way Jesus could. Noone could make His point more deftly and more profoundly and more penetrating as Jesus could as a communicator because He was operating with the mind of God. And because of that, along with His ability to heal and cast out demons, masses of people flocked around to hear Him and to see the wonders and even to participate in what He was capable of doing. And so the multitude is pressing around Him.

This isn't the only time this happened. It didn't matter where He went, He drew crowds. But He was in Galilee and if you have ever been to Galilee you know that in the very heart of the Galilee, as it's called, which is the northern part of the land of Palestine all the way up to the Lebanese border, bordered on the east by Jordan, on the west by the Mediterranean, that north part of Israel, the major location there is the Sea of Galilee, or the lake of Gennesaret, as it's called here, sometimes the Sea of Tiberias, the Old Testament name was Chinneroth. But that lake, 13 miles long and about 7 miles wide, dominates the Galilee. To the east is the sort of low ridges and then the flat lands of the wilderness that goes to the east to the north are the great high mountains of Lebanon from which the water flows that flows in and creates the lake. To the west are the fertile marvelously, magnificent fertile fields of grain and crops and right on to the sea. On that...Mediterranean Sea...on that are the major cities. Tiberias would be a major city in the time of Christ on the western shore, and the north would be the city of Capernaum. And so Jesus spent a lot of His time around the lake. And it was a

good place to speak to people because you could be at the shore and the slope would be a place that would create sort of a natural amphitheater and the people could hear.

But there was a problem. As the crowds got bigger and bigger and pushed and pushed, pretty soon they pushed Jesus into the water. We read about this in Mark 3:9. We read about it again in Mark 4:1. So this was a somewhat typical problem to deal with in the Galilee as He was addressing crowds that gathered around Him along the shore of the lake. And so that's what you see in verse 1. There...there are literally thousands of people crushing and pressing as they listen to the Word of God. And it says in verse 1 He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. Gennesaret may be a word that refers to garden and could well be a reference to the fertile land on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee which is very defining. As you get on to the Sea of Galilee you see these beautiful fields stretching all the way around from the north sweeping around to the west. And there are even some on the east. And so it perhaps is a word that reflected the garden environment that surrounded the water of that lake. It is not technically a sea. Luke is right in the technical side in calling it a lake. It is a freshwater lake fed by the snow melt out of the Lebanese mountains, the high mountains that ultimately runs the south...out of the south of the Sea of Galilee comes the Jordan River which runs all the way down and empties into the very famous Dead Sea.

So there He is on the shore with this mass of people coming out of towns and villages and cities, crowding around and eventually pushing Him. It tells us in verse 1, this is a very important point, they were listening to the Word of God. They were listening to the word of God. This is a subjective genitive and let me tell you what that means. An accurate translation is they were listening to the word that comes from God...they were listening to the word that comes from God. This is the first time Luke uses the phrase "the Word of God," and to us it's a technical term. You might even have a Bible that says, I know some people around here, the Word of God. When we say the Word of God, that's...that's almost a technical synonym for the Bible. But try to look at this as a non-technical term, as a descriptive term. It hasn't yet become sort of a familiar almost a part of Christian vocabulary. And what He is saying here is they were listening to the word that comes from God.

In other words, when Jesus spoke who was speaking? God. This is the source of divine truth. This is the sermon that He put together by doing research in some other book. By the way, you never in the gospel record find Jesus at the library. You never find Him in His study. He didn't need resource material. He opened His mouth and God spoke and since He already knew everything there was to be known, and all truth came from Him, there was no reason to go anywhere else to find any information. They were listening to the word that comes from God. And it was the word about salvation and it was the word about entering the Kingdom of God. And it was the word about the forgiveness of sins. It was the word built on Isaiah 61 as Jesus referred to it in chapter 4 verse 18. It was the good news that the poor could be made spiritually rich. It was the good news that the prisoners of sin could be set free by forgiveness. It was good news that the spiritually blind could be given sight. It was the good news that the spiritually oppressed would be liberated to the glorious

inheritance that God give to His children. It was the good news of forgiveness, salvation and eternal life. And when Jesus preached it, it was coming from God. They were listening to the word that comes from God. Luke uses that same phrase in chapter 8 verse 11 and verse 21, and again in chapter 11 verse 28. This is the first time he uses it.

Jesus then is the source of truth. When He preached the Sermon on the Mount up there on the hillside at the north end of the Sea of Galilee, and He finished that great sermon in which the Beatitudes really were the launch point, the introduction, the people said, "He speaks as one having authority, not like the scribes and Pharisees." The scribes and Pharisees quoted sources, they quoted other people, they gave opinions, they...they attached themselves to some of the current literature and some of the ancient literature to document their viewpoint. Jesus never did that. He simply spoke the truth. There was no other source than His own divine mind. When Jesus spoke it was God speaking. He was giving the long-awaited divine revelation of the Kingdom and how you could come into the Kingdom because God was providing salvation through Him. This was the good news of forgiveness. It was not His opinion, it was not His viewpoint. He was not a theologian. He was not a scholar of the Old Testament. He wasn't giving a sermon from prepared notes. This was not philosophy. This was not theological intuition. This was divine revelation. This was God speaking. He spoke and it was the voice of God. This is clear to the reader of the gospel of Luke in the very beginning in chapter 1 when the angel Gabriel comes to Mary and said you're going to have a baby and that baby will be the Son of the Most High, verse 32. And verse 35, He will be called the Son of God. Son meaning same in essence. So we already know that Jesus is God, God the Son and therefore when He speaks God the Son speaks. When Jesus came to earth He came as God in human flesh and He spoke. He said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life." He is truth. He is synonymous with truth. He is one with truth. John 1 introduces Him, "The Word becoming flesh and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." He is the fullness of truth. He speaks nothing but the truth. He is God, Titus 1:2, who cannot lie.

Turn for a moment to the gospel of John. John makes a very strong point of this and I only want to arm you a little bit with regard to this. In John 5:24 Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life." His word, His truth, so powerful that it literally dispenses eternal life. If you listen to what He says and believe it, you have eternal life. That's how powerful His word is. It is divine. It is by that word, Peter said, that we are begotten again. It is by that word that we are transformed and given life. You hear My words, you believe My words, and those words have divine power to give you life. Repeatedly He defended His words as the very words of God. He said you must believe that when I speak it is God speaking. Chapter 7 verse 16 of John's gospel, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching whether it is of God or whether I speak for Myself. If you will hear what I say and believe it, you will know that it is the word of God. It is not Mine, it is that word which comes from God My Father."

God by nature is true. Let every man be a liar. God is true and only and always true and when Jesus who is God spoke what He spoke was the truth, always the truth, nothing but the truth. Jesus said in John 8:31, "If you abide in My word, you are truly disciples of Mine and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The truth will set you free from sin, the truth will set you free from judgment. The truth will set you free from darkness and blindness. And the truth is what I say. And if you believe what I say, that is the truth that saves you and sets you free. The gospels record the words of Jesus and the rest of the epistles in the New Testament show us the depth and importance of meaning in the things that He said, but it is the truth that He proclaimed. It is the truth that the Apostles proclaimed about Him that saves sinners.

In John 8:42 Jesus said, "If God were your Father you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, I have not even come on My own initiative but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My Word. I come from God, I am God, I speak God's word and you don't hear it." Why? Verse 44, "You are of your father the devil. You want to do the desires of your father and he was a murderer from the beginning and doesn't stand in the truth, there's no truth in him."

So you have two kinds of people in the world, those who believe the devil's lies and those who believe the truth of God. Verse 45, Jesus says, "Because I speak the truth, you don't believe Me." Verse 46, "If I speak the truth why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God." Jesus again is saying, when I speak it's the words of God, it's right out of the mind of God. And if you believed it, you would understand it.

This same testimony again John gives throughout his letter, I don't want to read all of the portions but John 12:49 is important. "I didn't speak on My own initiative but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment what to say and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life, therefore the things I speak I speak just as the Father has told Me." Literally, I am giving you the very words of God which have the power to produce eternal life.

Now God is true, we know that. That's one of His attributes. Psalm 138:2, "I bow down to Thy holy temple and give thanks to Thy name for Thy loving kindness and Thy truth. Thou hast magnified Thy word according to all Thy name." In other words, God magnifies His word equal to His name because His word is the expression of His essential truth. That's why Psalm 146:6 says, "God keeps truth forever." Isaiah 65:16 twice says God is the God of truth.

And so, it says then in chapter 5 that Jesus was speaking the words that come from God. Here you have evidence of His deity. This is not a human opinion, this is not a man, even a theologian who is well studied, this is not a scholar talking, this is the very word from God. As He stands by the lake and speaks the very word of God, the crowd is pushing Him and in verse 2 it says He saw two boats

lying at the edge of the lake. They would have been fairly large boats and so they wouldn't have been all the way up on dry land but the bow was pushed into the shore of that lake and they were there. The fishermen had gotten out of them, verse 2 says, and were washing their nets.

The fishing enterprise was a very, very consuming thing. What they did took up days and nights. They fished at night and during the day they had to repair their tackle, their boat, and in this case their nets. And so it was daytime now and Jesus perhaps had begun His first lesson teaching in the morning, and then there is later to be more teaching when He gets into the boat. It perhaps is 11 o'clock in the morning, maybe even pressing noon by now. He sees as the crowd is pushing and pushing the two boats on the edge of the lake and the fishermen gone and washing their nets to prepare for the next night of fishing.

And just a reminder. This is more information then you may want to know, but it makes this come alive. A fisherman typically and certainly at the Sea of Galilee fish at night because at night the fish come to the surface and to the shore. Fishermen today will tell you generally the cloudier the day, or the darker the sky, the better the fishing. And in the sea of Galilee region, in the Galilee, it is blazing sun in the middle of the day and so the fishermen typically would fish all night and spend the daytime repairing their nets and so forth so they could be prepared to fish again when night came. Days were the days to work on the equipment. Nights were for fishing.

Now the boats were fairly large. We have a couple of incidents in the New Testament that indicate that to us. You have Mark chapter 4 where you have all the disciples in a boat and Jesus sleeping. You have Mark chapter 6 where you have all the disciples in the boat plus Jesus, at least 13 people, and maybe a crew to run the boat. You have another incident in Matthew chapter 8 verse 23, or another account of the same incident that's in Mark 4 and Matthew 8, again indicating that all the disciples were in the same boat.

Now in this boat you're going to see Jesus gets in the boat, Simon gets in the boat, James and John get in the boat and probably there's a crew to assist in the fishing enterprise. So this would be a fairly large boat with some beams that could be used for the nets, with some winches that might be used to pull the nets in, with a sail that could be used to move the boat along as well as some oars with a hold so there was a deck and a hold below where the fish could be dumped into the boat after they were gathered in with the nets. So these boats would be sitting on the shore. Boats that would be manned by whoever owned the boat, the people who were the owners as well as a crew who served in the fishing enterprise.

So there the boats sit at the edge of the lake. Verse 3 says He got into one of the boats which was Simon's. Now there's a reason for this. The Lord didn't do anything just by accident. Everything was intentional, divinely intentional, sovereignly purposeful. It was time to bring Peter to full commitment and to bring those who followed his leadership, in this case James and John, to their full commitment

as well.

Let me give you a little bit of background. Jesus first met Peter back in the first chapter of John. John records the first time they met. Jesus met Peter and his brother. That was the first meeting and at that time Jesus called them to follow Him. This was sort of the first step in their following Jesus. It was later on, recorded in Mark 1:16 to 20, and Matthew 4 about verse 18 to 22, that there was a second calling. The first time they just sort of follow Jesus. Later on, as recorded in Mark 1 and Matthew 4, Jesus made a more direct call and I guess they could say, we could say they became part-time followers, only in that case it was Peter and James and John who were the sons of a man named Zebedee. And they were all partners in the fishing business. So they had already had a couple of encounters with Jesus. Peter, that first calling with his brother, that second calling with James and John.

Now Jesus is beginning to know Peter because Peter is following Him. That's why in chapter 4 after the synagogue service, when it was dinner time, Jesus went to Simon's house. He knows him now and Simon has become at least a far...a part-time follower, a little bit of fishing and a little bit of following Jesus. It hasn't been too difficult to follow Jesus and fish because Jesus has stayed in Galilee and so Peter could connect at certain points between his necessary employment as a fisherman. And so Jesus knows Peter but it is time to take Peter to another level. By the way, Jesus did this throughout His whole life, even after the resurrection, trying to get Peter to the level He wanted him at. He was very reluctant and a difficult guy to deal with. But he was also the recognized leader of the Apostles. It was important to have Peter where he needed to be because he was the one who had seemingly the greatest influence on the rest. And so Peter is seemingly the key person for the Lord. You have four lists of Apostles in the New Testament, Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts, and in all four Peter's name is first. He is clearly recognized as the spokesman and the leader. And so Jesus is going to work on Peter a little bit and James and John, as we see, will follow along. But Peter is the target, so He wants to get in Peter's boat, and that's exactly what He does. He's here called Simon, he will be called Simon by Luke until we get to chapter 6 verse 14 when he is fully identified as Peter. By this time the Lord had already changed his name but it didn't get changed in the text of Luke until the sixth chapter, although He does refer to him here in verse 8 as Simon Peter, which sort of helps us make that transition.

So He gets into Simon's boat. It's going to be school time now for Simon. And He's going to reveal to Simon and the others who He really is. So He says to him, "Put out a little way from the land." Let's get this boat back off the shore or we're going to get pushed into the water here. And because the crowd has gotten right down to the edge, Jesus needs some space. And by the way, water is a good conductor of sound and this is a fairly flat lake and gentle surface of that lake would make a good point to sort of bounce the sound to that crowd of thousands that had gathered and it would give Jesus a little bit of distance. And so He asked him to put out a little way from the land, so Peter gets in the boat, whoever else needed to help him handled this boat and push it back off the shore and

stabilize in the water so that Jesus could sit down, it says in verse 3, and begin again to teach the multitudes from the boat. So this is the second set of lessons. The first one completed now, He gets...the crowd is getting bigger and bigger, pressing and pressing, and they've been listening to the word of God but now Jesus has to get away into the water and He teaches them again.

Just a reminder here, this is relentless on Jesus' part. No matter what the exigencies, no matter what the difficulties, no matter how much the press of the crowd is, you don't stop teaching, you just find a way to keep doing it because this is at the heart of why Jesus came. He came to seek and to save the lost in order to bring them the truth because you can't be saved apart from the truth. No difficulty can ever interrupt teaching, preaching. This is that which is most critical. You can set the miracles aside, you can set the casting out of demons aside, you can set the supernatural wonders aside, but you cannot set the teaching aside. And so, Jesus must continue His teaching. He must continue to preach to the poor and the prisoners and the blind and the oppressed who need to hear the message of forgiveness and the Kingdom of God.

He sat down, it says in verse 3, in a traditional, rabbinical posture for teaching, and continued His instruction, teaching the multitudes from the boat again the word of God. Let me just inject this, folks, and I don't want to beat a dead horse but this horse isn't dead yet. I keep reminding you, and I just did that series on deliverance and I was telling you in the series on deliverance that there is a rapidly exploding movement in quote/unquote evangelical Christianity to deny that it is necessary to hear the gospel to be saved. Jesus was relentless about teaching. He was relentless about the proclamation of the truth. And He told His disciples when I'm gone you go into the world and preach the gospel to whom? Every creature and you command them to do all things whatsoever I have commanded you. You take the gospel to every creature to the ends of the earth because there isn't any salvation apart from the gospel, right? Can't be saved, there's no salvation in any other name then the name of Jesus Christ. And Paul in Romans 10 says, "Look, in order to be saved, to be a Christian, you have to confess Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. And how are they going to believe that if they don't hear that, and how are they going to hear that...Paul says...unless somebody preaches? And how is somebody going to preach unless they are sent." So there is the whole enterprise. We have to send people to the ends of the earth who can preach the gospel because people can't be converted unless they hear the gospel and believe the gospel. That's pretty endemic, isn't it, to Christianity. Not any more...not any more.

As I told you quoting various sources there is this new movement in evangelicalism that essentially says people are going to get to heaven, they're going to get into the Kingdom of God from all different points of belief and without the Bible and without the gospel. This is not new. And I just want to...I just want to take a minute or two to show you this is not new, folks. This is an old heresy. This is an old heresy that is part of the Roman Catholic Church. This goes back to Saint Thomas Aquinas, for those of you who know any of that history. This is the heresy of natural theology...natural theology, or I suppose you could call it rational theology. And that is the idea that you can get to God through

natural means. You can get to God through your own rational mind so that wherever you are in whatever culture and whatever religion and whatever particular system of belief or non-belief, if you follow your rational thinking back to the fact that there must be a God, and you live a good life, you are going to come into the Kingdom of God, be saved and go to heaven if you never see a Bible or ever hear the gospel. Listen, the Roman Catholic Church has believed that for a long, long time. That is Roman Catholic theology. That is why the Vatican welcomes Hopi Indian witch doctors and embraces them. That is why they have confabs with Buddhists and Muslims and everybody else and all religions, that is basic Roman Catholic theology.

To affirm that to you, this is from yesterday's L.A. Times. It says, "Pope takes inclusive view of salvation." I'll read it to you. "Pope John Paul II said this week that all who live a just life will be saved, even if they do not believe in Jesus Christ." This is not new, that is what Vatican II said. And what is happening in evangelicalism, people say, "Oh, we need to embrace these people, we need to put our arms around them, we need to get together with these people because that's the loving thing to do." What they're doing in getting together is embracing this old heresy. "The Pontiff addressing thirty-thousand pilgrims in Saint Peter's Square strongly asserted the Second Vatican Council's liberal interpretation of the Bible's teaching on salvation." This is a quote from the Pope. "The gospel teaches us that those who live in accordance with the Beatitudes, the poor in spirit, the pure of heart, those who bear lovingly the sufferings of life will enter God's Kingdom," end quote. This has always been there. We're...we're the wayward brethren to the Roman system, but if we do good, even as Protestants, we'll get there but so will the Muslims and so will the Buddhists, and so will the pagans and the animists and whoever else is trying to do good. And that's why I told you when I gave you that information from the quotes with Schuller and Graham, this is not naive discussion, this is an old theological error of serious proportions that has been imbibed on a lot of fronts. The main apologist for this today has been Peter Kreep[?] who wrote the book Ecumenical Jihad which was affirmed, as I told, by Colson and Packer and there are others like Clark Pinnock[?] who are quote/unquote "main sort of line influential evangelical people." And they have all embraced this and this marriage with Rome is not only accepting Rome's view of salvation in Christ through works, but it is accepting Rome's view of salvation without Christ. And we're talking about some serious things. I just wanted to throw that footnote in incase you may have wondered where that came from. Nobody is inventing that today, that is an old lie that Satan has been propounding for a very long time.

Jesus knew and you know if you know the Bible that salvation comes by hearing the word about Christ, right? Romans 10. And how are they going to hear if you don't preach? Jesus knew that and so God had one Son and He was a preacher and He preached His whole ministry. And then He appointed Apostles who would preach. And then He chose gifted men to be preachers, pastor/teachers and evangelists all down through history because how are they going to hear if we don't preach? And then He gave us a commission to send people to the ends of the earth to proclaim the gospel because there isn't any salvation apart from it. And this is such a serious error that has come in that it redefines not only the gospel, not only salvation but it redefines the work of the church

and the missions of the world. But Jesus knew, Jesus knew what was important, truth was important and the gospel and relentlessly He did it. And if it got difficult, He figured out a way to solve it. There were a number of occasions when He had to get into a boat to get away from the crowd. He taught everywhere. He taught in the temple, as we'll see later. He taught in synagogues. He taught in a cemetery in John 11. He taught by the side of the lake. He taught in houses. Sometimes, as I said, they had to open the roof to let people down the crowds were so big in the house. Anywhere and everywhere all through His life He preached because that is necessary. You cannot come to the Kingdom of God unless you believe and in believing the Word, the Word then has the power to transform you and make you a child of God.

So what do we see in Jesus that indicates who He is? Divine truth, He spoke the words that come from God. Secondly, divine knowledge, this is just a brief point but I want to make it. Divine knowledge. Now I'm no great fisherman. I...I've said this, people say, "Do you like to fish?" And I say no, I like to catch. Fishing is no fun at all, catching is okay. And if you mean do I want to go sit somewhere for five hours and catch nothing? No. But if you have ten minutes that I can catch something, I'll come. I mean, I'm very pragmatic about this. Catching is good, fishing is not interesting. And, you know, but I have been taught to catch by some really good catchers, I call them. Catchermen. One of them is Ray Scott, Ray Scott is Mr. Bass, he's the world's best-known bass fisherman and he taught me how to catch bass. And he took me, the first time I had ever gone bass fishing, and it was pretty amazing, he taught me how to cast. We were on this lake and he's a very experienced guy. And so he said, "I think the fish are over there," and he pointed to someplace in this lake and we're in this little bass boat, this is a couple of years ago and he says, "I think they're over there," and he said, "but I want you to experiment with the cast here." And so I cast and did pretty well at it and I got a hit immediately, I got a hit. And what happened was I pulled in a...I think it was a nine-pound twelve-ounce large-mouth bass which Ray told me would be like in golf getting a hole-in-one. That is a huge fish and he was shocked, first of all, that I caught it and shocked that he didn't think they were there, that they were over there...this is the guy who knows more about bass fishing. But what I found out is he doesn't know where the fish are. He has all these little deals in his boat that, you know, sonar, and whatever to try to find the fish, but he didn't know where the fish were and he didn't know that big fish was over there and I was only just trying to practice. Now there's another great fisherman in our church, Christopher Parkening, who's really a world-class fly fisherman and tarpon fisher, he's won the Gold Cup Florida Tarpon Fishing Tournament and all this, and I went fishing with him. And we...he's world-class and we...we floated around for a long time trying to find a fish. And so I have concluded this, the great challenge in fishing is to find the fish because you can't hook them if you can't find them. Right? So the big deal is not all how you tie things and how do this...the big deal is find the fish! Just find the fish.

Well, that's what makes Jesus a catcher and not a fisher. Jesus had divine knowledge. This is amazing. He knew exactly where the fish were. Wouldn't you like to go fishing with Him? He knew exactly where the fish were...exactly. You say, "How do you know that?" Well, I can give you a

comparison. Matthew 10:29 and 30 says this, "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent and yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father's knowledge?" What does that mean "fall to the ground?" One commentator says the word actually means hops. Never does a sparrow, a little tiny inconsequential bird, never does a sparrow hop that God doesn't know it hopped. God knows every sparrow on the planet and He knows every time a sparrow hops. That same passage says, "The very hairs of your head are numbered." For some of you that's not a really big challenge. For some of us, I guess I should say. But I don't think the point...I don't think the point is that God is up there trying to keep account. The point is that in omniscience God knows everything there is to know, everything that exists He knows. He doesn't learn it, He doesn't conclude it by adding. He doesn't know sparrows hop because He watches them. Everything that exists He knows whether it's material or immaterial. So believe me, Jesus as God will know where the fish are. And this is omniscience. And this is what flows out of this. God's understanding is unsearchable, Isaiah 40:28 says, known to God from eternity are all His works. Hebrews 4:13, "There's no creature hidden from His sight." God knows where every fish in every lake and every ocean is at all times because God omnisciently knows everything that exits in the material and immaterial world and the condition and state of everything, not only now but in the past and the future. He knows everything. Nothing in the universe is beyond His full comprehension.

We see this revealed, look at verse 4. "When Jesus finished His teaching He said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water, let your nets down for a catch.'" We're going fishing. This is a big enterprise, folks. There are two kinds of nets, this is more than you want to know, but I'm going to tell you anyway. There are two kind of nets. There is a hand-held one-man net. There's a reference to that, a couple of references to that in the New Testament in Matthew 4 and in Mark 1, those comparative passages where the Lord was calling Simon and Andrew. They were fishing with a one-man net and you used the one-man net along the shore when it was dark, dusk at night or before the dawn and you would walk in the shallow water until you came to the school because the fish would come to the shore, to the surface and to the shore in the dark and you had essentially a large circle weighted net on the outside, the perimeter was weighted. In the middle you had a cord you held in one hand, and you spun that net and sent the weights out over the school of fish. You walked along the shallows until you came to a school of fish and you flung that, the weights then went down, sunk to the bottom, surrounded the fish. You had a cord in the hand, you pulled the cord tight and essentially what you had was a catch of fish in that net that surrounded that school that you found when you were wading, it was used when you were wading, you pulled it into the shore. That's a small one-man net. But the kind of net here, it's a general word used, diktuon, it doesn't tell us, but we know the kind of net because it took two boats to work this net so we know what it was. This net is called a sagena, a sagena or sometimes called a seine. It is a massive, massive net. It is a net that is generally put in the fishing experience of Peter between two boats and history tells us it could be as long as a half mile, very, very, very large net and it had corks on the top and it had weights on the bottom. So it created...when the boats separated it created a wall of net and into that wall of net everything would literally swim and be collected and then the net was by cords and some winches pulled together and

pulled together and pulled together until you had this massive potential to catch whatever was there. That is what they were using, this great sagena. Well in order to operate this you had to have a crew of men. This was a large operation. This was a very big net. You can imagine a half a mile of net piled up on a boat and dragged out and spread out as the boat separated, covering this massive amount of area. Pulled finally into a great circle as the boats pulled around, they pulled this wall of net into a circle as they got together and then they began to pull the rope in and pull the thing together.

In the middle of the day, however, at the brightest point of the sunlight, it was generally possible that the fish could be so deep they were even below the ability of that net to go down and find them. And furthermore, after all, Peter had fished all night and caught nothing, so Peter was convinced there were no fish there. Peter's experience, lots of years of fishing, that's his lake, that's his area. He knows what he knows and he cannot resist telling the Lord that in verse 5. "Simon answered and said, 'Master,'" it's a term of respect, it's not deity, master is a word that is epistates, it means chief, or commander, or one in authority. Peter's following Jesus but he's not yet quite there in terms of fully understanding who Jesus is, but he knows he's following Him and he sees Jesus as his leader and commander. It's a word that only you...only Luke uses and he uses it about seven times. It refers to anybody who's in authority. So he's...it's more than teacher, the non-followers call Jesus rabbi, or teacher, the follower here calls Him Master. He's not necessarily saying deity, he gets to that down in verse 8 when he calls Him Lord. But here it's Master. And he can't resist saying, "We worked all night and caught nothing." It's as if he says, "Let me remind you, you are a carpenter, we are the fishermen. You're out of your field, right? I mean, you understand we've got to get this...we've got to get all this crew together, we've got to get all this tackle together, we've got to get the nets we've been washing, we've got to get them back in the boat, this is going to take a lot of work. We fished all night, we caught absolutely nothing. I'm telling you, the fish aren't there. We've been there all night, they're not there. That's not how it is and you're going to make us go to all this work and all this effort and get out there and spread this thing out and go through all this and it's going to all be pointless. Then as I said, by then it's noon and the sun is burning down on the lake and the fish are way down and there just aren't any fish. But...he says, and of course you would say this if the Lord had just healed your mother-in-law and made your wife happy, so he says...Master, we worked all night and caught nothing, but at your bidding I will let down the nets, the least I can owe you for healing my mother-in-law who is a tremendous cook and got right out of bed and made dinner and all of that. So hey, what can I say..what can I say? We'll do it."

So the whole enterprise gets going and when he says there, "I will let down the nets," he means "I will have the nets let down because this is an enterprise that says two boats with two crews." Verse 6, "But when they had done this they enclosed a great quantity of fish and the nets began to break." You know why? Jesus knew where the fish were. That's what hits you, He knew where the fish were. Peter says, "There's no fish there." Jesus said, "Put the net down." He knew where the fish were. If He knows every sparrow's hop, He knows where all His fish are. He knew where they were,

He knew exactly where they were. One time in Matthew 17 they needed to pay their taxes, remember that? Peter needed money for the taxes. Jesus said, "Go down there, put your hook in the water and pull out the fish and the fish has a coin in his mouth that will pay for both of us." He knew what fish had the coin, where the fish was. He said, "Go put the thing down there, that's where that fish is." And then there was John 21 where Peter was fishing after the resurrection. Peter was fishing and he couldn't catch anything, remember? And Jesus was on the shore and He said, "Try the right side of the boat." Try the right side of the boat. And they did and they couldn't even get all the fish in. Why? He always knew where the fish were. He always knows where everything is because He knows everything that is to know. There are no limits on His knowledge except those which He imposed upon Himself in His condescension. But He is God and He's omniscient as God and He knows everything. It says in John chapter 2 that He didn't need anybody to tell Him what they were thinking because He knew what they were thinking. When He had a conversation with Nicodemus in John 3 He answered a question Nicodemus hadn't asked, but He read his mind.

This is God. We know God is omniscient, Psalm 139 lays out the omniscience of God in the most magnificent language, just a couple of verses will suffice. "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me, Thou dost know when I sit down, when I rise up. Thou dost understand my thought from afar. Thou hast scrutinized my path, my lying down, are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there's a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it all. You have inclosed me behind and before, laid Your hand on me, such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is too high, I can't attain it. You know everything." This is God. Jesus knew where all the fish were. He knew what men can't know, possessed divine knowledge. And so you have here divine truth and divine knowledge. Now next time we're going to see how omniscience, divine knowledge, blends into power omnipotence.

Now let's go back to where we started. Where do you go to find the quest for the historical Jesus satisfied? The Scripture, right? If you want to know the real Jesus, where do you go? You go to the gospels. And here you have Him revealed. And as I said at the very beginning, you would have to face the fact that what you have here is someone who speaks the very words of God and who knows what only God knows. The best of fishermen, the most professional, the most experienced, the most astute in their own area at their own lake on their own shore with their own boat and their own equipment didn't know what Jesus knew cause He knows everything. This is God in human flesh, the Redeemer, the Lord, Savior of sinners.

Father, we thank You for the power of this magnificent presentation and this is only but part of it. We see the glory of Christ. He came so lowly of birth, He came so mistreated. He came so humbly all the way down to the form of a man, all the way down to die on a cross and yet in every sense He is God. He has to be man to die for man, He has to be God to conquer death and sin. And so He did. And we see the real Jesus here, magnificently unfolded before us as the great preacher of divine truth coming from His own mind and as the One who knew what no human could know. This is God,

this is our Savior, this is our Christ. This is the one whose birth we celebrate, whose life we desire to emulate and in whose death and resurrection we put our hope for eternal life. May He be glorified. We pray in His great name. Amen.

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