

My Lord and My God!

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Well, if you're anything at all like me, it's a blessing to be able to step back and step away from the things of the world, the news of the headlines of the day, especially in a presidential election year, and to simply focus on who the Lord Jesus Christ is and to let our thoughts be consumed with Christ rather than the conflicts of men and the foolishness of politicians and different things that dominate the thinking of the world. This is a blessing for us to be able to step aside, open God's word and focus on our Lord Jesus Christ, and so I'm glad that you're with us here this evening.

We're in a study on the deity of Christ and I'm going to do this message tonight and then one more next week before we return to the Psalms on the following week after that, and last week we saw four points and basically what we're doing here is that we are using the Gospel of John as a means of walking through the various aspects of scriptural testimony that point to the deity of Christ. Jesus Christ was far more than a good teacher. He was not simply a good man and a moral example. He wasn't simply a prophet. Jesus Christ was God in human flesh, pre-existent before time began, very God of very God, and unless you understand that about Christ, you don't understand him at all. Martyn Lloyd Jones rightly said that unless you believe in the unique deity of Christ, you are not a Christian no matter what else you may believe. We must believe in the true Christ. We must know him for who he really is if we are going to be Christians and be saved and delivered from our sin. So this is a vital central issue. It is the person of Christ, not moral regulations that are at the heart of what the Gospel is. It is the person of Jesus Christ alone that can save you, not your self efforts. You must come to him in repentance and faith, and if you're going to do that, you must know who he is in order to be saved.

So we saw four things last week from the Gospel of John. First of all, we saw that the Bible calls Jesus God. We were looking at seven different points that point to the deity of Christ from the Gospel of John. We saw four last week, we're going to deal with the final three this week. First of all, the Bible calls Jesus God. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word and that Word was with God and the Word was God." A clear definitive statement about the person of Christ. Then we moved over to John 5 and we saw that Jesus does the works of God. He said in John 5:17, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." And the Jews wanted to stone him because in verse 18, "He was making Himself equal with God." We looked at that last week as well. We saw from John 8 that Jesus took the very name of God to himself. John 8:58, he said, "Before Abraham was, I am," a reference to the unique name of God revealed in Exodus 3. Then finally last week

we looked at the fact that Jesus has unity with God; he said in John 10:30, "I and the Father are one." So we have just this overflowing, multifaceted testimony of the Gospel of John saying this Jesus of whom this Gospel is about is God himself. He is God in human flesh.

And if we only had those four points to go on, we would have a conclusive final testimony that was more than adequate for us to believe in Christ as God in human flesh but the Gospel of John keeps going and lays more and more things before us so that you can't miss it, so that the testimony to the deity of Christ would be resounding, reverberating repeatedly, rehearsing in your mind that this Christ is God himself and as God, that means we bow before him and we worship. As God, it means that he has authority over our lives. As God, it means also, most wondrously, that he has the authority and the ability to forgive us and to rescue us from our sins. So who Christ is is central to the eternal well-being of your soul, that should never be lost in your mind and so we want to be clear on who Christ is and having looked at those first four points, we move into a fifth point here this evening and it is this: Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father. Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father. When you look at Christ, you see what God the Father is like.

I want to take you to a familiar passage, John 14, and we'll walk through some of the verses here in John 14. John 14, beginning in verse 1, and even right from the very start, you see Jesus putting himself on an equal plane with God the Father. He says in John 14:1, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." So he says, "You should believe in God and with equal clarity and authority and submission, you should believe in me as well." Right from the very beginning of this chapter. Can you imagine anyone else saying anything like that? You would never say anything like that to someone. You would never tell someone, "You should believe in God and, oh by the way, believe in me also." That would be blasphemy of the highest order. We don't call men to believe in us. Jesus, however, calls men to believe in him in the same way that they believe in God.

Look at verse 2, he says, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." So here in this passage Jesus is saying, "I am leaving soon but don't worry, I'll come again. I'm going to come back for you and I'm going to prepare a place for you and eventually we'll be together in heaven forever." So it's a wonderful promise but the disciples at that time didn't get it. They were struggling to understand the fullness of what Jesus was saying and in verse 4, Jesus said, "You know the way where I am going," and Thomas says, "Lord, time out. You're way ahead of me. You're down the road too far." And he says to him in verse 5, "Lord, we don't know where You are going, how do we know the way?" He says, "Lord, you're talking about going away, being with us in heaven but I don't understand, how do we know the way of which you speak?" So Jesus responds to Thomas and he said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

And as you continue reading on, Philip now is confused. Jesus said in verse 7, "If you had known Me," look at this, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also." How could he say that? It's because they are of the same essence. They are exactly alike. They are exactly equal with one another. That's not true of anyone else except for the blessed Holy Spirit. Jesus says, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Philip throws his hands up in the air, looks over at Thomas and says, "Thomas, what are we going to do with this?" So Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Thomas and Philip had not yet come to understand and appreciate who Christ was because if you knew who Jesus Christ was and you knew that you were looking at God and hearing God speak when he spoke, then you would never ask to see the Father because you would realize you were seeing an exact equivalent in front of you.

So Jesus says to him there in verse 9, "Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, "Show us the Father"?' So, in other words, to know Jesus Christ is to know exactly what God the Father is like. There is no diminishment. There is no space between them. And just as God the Father is uncreated deity who has always existed, so also Jesus Christ is uncreated deity who has always existed, of equal essence with God the Father, and so when you see Christ, when you hear Christ speak, you are seeing the Father. That can only be true if Jesus is God himself. Jesus is a perfect revelation of God the Father.

Look over at Hebrews 1. I know I said that we would stay in the Gospel of John but this bleeds over elsewhere and that's okay. Look at Hebrews 1:1, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." Now, verse 3, speaking about Jesus Christ says, "He is the radiance of His glory," look at this, "and the exact representation of His nature." Jesus Christ is exactly what God is. He perfectly represents who God the Father is. When you look at Christ, you are seeing who God is. When you look into the face of Christ, as it were, you are looking into the face of God himself. The words of Christ, the works of Christ, the character of Christ, the attributes of Christ, the glory of Christ, all perfectly reveal those exact attributes of who God is.

Go back now to John 14, if you would. John 14:10 and 11. Jesus continuing on in what he said to Philip says, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves." There is this complete mutuality between God the Father and God the Son, between God the Father and Jesus Christ. What the Father does, Jesus does. The Father is in Christ and Christ is in the Father in a coextensive mutuality that has no parallel anywhere in the universe or in the recorded annals of time. A. T. Robertson, the great Greek grammarian from a century ago said this, he said, "The disciples had seen the Father because they had seen Jesus who is

the Son of God, the image of God, and like God, hence God is like Jesus Christ. It is a bold and daring claim to deity."

So Philip here in John 14 had been with Christ for three full years of the ministry and at this point he did not yet get it. He would in time. God would make that known to him but his confusion, his lack of understanding became the setting for Christ to declare these things about himself. Jesus speaking says, "I perfectly reveal God the Father to you. He who has seen Me, has seen God." It could not be any plainer than that, particularly when you remember the other things that we have seen, that the Bible calls Jesus God; he does the works of God; he has the name of God; he has full unity with God the Father. Well, when you start to put all of these things together, these things just start to tumble out upon one another and what I would want you to see, beloved, and have very clear and settled in your mind is that the biblical case for the deity of Christ is broad, it is deep, it is extensive even in the Gospel of John. So while John 1:1 is a clear and definitive statement about the deity of Christ, that's not the only place where that is found in Scripture. It's not the only place where it is found in the Gospel of John. You could not understand the Gospel of John if you took away the deity of Christ and that's important for you to remember when, if you encounter a Jehovah's Witness or somebody like that and they try to just focus on and twist and distort beyond recognition the meaning of John 1:1, understand first of all that they are distorting that Scripture badly and deceitfully, deliberately distorting it, but also understand that the rest of the Gospel of John is saying the same thing as John 1:1 does and so it's important for you to realize that this biblical case for the deity of Christ does not stand on one verse alone. That's the point.

So let me back away, not back away but just backup for a moment and just ask you this: is the knowledge of Jesus Christ, is an assurance that he is God in human flesh, is that a living reality to you? Is that one of the sweetest things that you could ever know? Because to love Christ as God, to bow before him as God, is a sure mark of a true Christian and so to know Christ as God, to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is one of the abounding proofs of the reality of your salvation. So I would just ask you whether that's real to you, whether you understand that, whether that is precious to you or not because to a true Christian, it will be precious.

Now, let me also just give you a word of encouragement if the deity of Christ has been something that you have wrestled with. It was something that I had to work through even as a new believer because of this: before I became a Christian, I was under the influence of certain people who denied the deity of Christ; who assaulted that with a verbal barrage and denied that Christ was God. Well, I became a Christian but I had to work through, I had to come to grips with Scripture in order to come to a settled understanding that was immovable on the point. That occurred over a period of time to be able to come to that. It's not that I was denying the deity of Christ or even questioning it, but working through those issues and understanding how to respond to those who attacked, that took a little bit more time. And so if you're there, let me just encourage you to continue to seek Christ, to believe in him, to study his word because these are things that the best minds in Christian history have come and settled and any question that you would ever have about this issue has been thoroughly addressed over the course of church history in a conclusive way, and

the answers that might still trouble your heart are out there to be had for the one who will just give himself to seek them. So, you know, having kind of come through a little bit of that myself, I can sympathize. I mean, these are things that were settled many years ago in my mind but I just understand that if you are on the front end, you need help, you need to study. That's why we're doing these things.

So many times, beloved, so many times things that I teach, things that I say to you are simply things that I wish I had heard at the early part of my Christian life rather than hearing stories or hearing jokes or lighthearted messages designed to give you a bump to get you through the week. You need the substantial things of biblical truth and biblical theology if you're going to grow and I needed those things and I know that you need them and that's why we study these things. That's why we go about this. But if you know Christ as God and you love him as God, let me just encourage you to let your heart soar tonight because the entrance to the kingdom of God will be abundantly supplied to you. If you know Christ as God, God has made himself known to you. He has, as it were, revealed himself. He has opened your eyes to that truth with the intention to save you and to bring you safely into heaven forever. Isn't that like the most wonderful thing ever? That the God of the Bible has made himself known to you in the person of Christ, in the proclamation of the Gospel? That you know the real God, you know the true God and that while others may be lost in sin, God has had mercy on you? That's the most wonderful thing in the world.

There is one other aspect of this that if I had less self-control than I do as I stand here, I would pick something up and start pounding it on the pulpit to make the point. Do you realize, I want you to understand this, that those who deny the deity of Christ are robbing God of his glory in a horrific horrendous way? Think with me here, here's the truth of the matter: God became a man in order to go to Calvary to secure your salvation. He did that himself. For somebody to say that God created Christ and sent Christ to do the work himself, it is such a perversion because it robs God of his glory. It says that God created a proxy to go do the hard work for him while God stayed back and didn't engage in the suffering that was necessary to secure your salvation. People who say those kinds of things, those damnable false religions that teach such things, rip away the glory of God from your heart. They would close you off from true salvation and say that it was not God who went to Calvary, it was not God who suffered for your sins, you cannot say, "How is it, my God, that you should die for me?" It was some proxy. It was someone else. And all of a sudden the love of God is torn away. The love of God is diminished because the love of God is most shown when God the Son lays his life down himself for your sins. So to call Christ someone other, to say that he is someone other than God, is to take the deity out of the divine love that is shown on the cross. That's an awful thing to say. That's a blasphemous thing to say and we will oppose that with all of our being, is what we'll do, because we will give God the glory that is his due. God became a man in order to be the propitiation for your sins and that makes God sweet.

Now, we've gone through five points, we come to number six here, point 6: Jesus has God's glory. Jesus has God's glory. Jesus claimed the glory of God as his own. Look at John 17:1, "Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, 'Father,

the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." During his incarnation, the glory of God in Christ was veiled. We sing about that in the Christmas hymn, don't we, "Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate deity." But it's veiled in human flesh. It is held back. It is veiled, as it were, during the course of his incarnation. Now Jesus says that the hour has come. The events are accelerating for the fulfillment of the incarnation. Christ will soon be crucified. Three days later he will be resurrected. Here in John 17, Jesus is praying in anticipation of his crucifixion when he would absorb the wrath of God on behalf of everyone who would ever believe in Christ.

Watch how he prays, notice the prayer that he prays there in verse 5. This is unthinkable if Jesus is anyone less than God. He says there in verse 5, look at it again with me, he says, "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." Do you realize what he's saying there? He's saying, "God, accomplish your purposes in what is about to take place in the crucifixion. Show me to be the Savior." And he says, "When this is all done, restore me to that glory which we shared together before the beginning of time." This is an astounding claim to deity. He is saying, "God, we shared equal glory together before the world began." Who could say that except someone who was fully equal with God, who was uncreated deity? Jesus was going to return to heaven and share again the glory of God with his Father. The incarnation would yield over to a glorified state in heaven after the ascension and he says, "Do it so that I might glorify you." God the Father is glorified when Jesus Christ is glorified. The mutuality is striking.

And in this passage, the first five verses of John 17, notice the striking things that Jesus says about his relationship with the Father. He says in verse 2 that God gave him authority over all flesh. He says in verse 3 that they equally share eternal life; to have eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. And as we saw in verse 5, that they shared equal glory with each other before the world began. Who talks this way? Who says things like that? Of whom could that be true, that the glory of God fully belongs to one except that that one is God himself? Jesus has the glory of God. He has the power of God, the life of God, the glory of God, and he shares it all equally with the Father. He had it before time began. You see, beloved, only God has the glory of God and yet Jesus can say, "I shared your glory with you before the world began." He can say that because he's fully equal with God. To be fully equal with God is to have the glory of God. It is to be God. That is who Jesus is. Can you imagine the blasphemy if you or I were to go before God – think about this, approach it from a different perspective – imagine the blasphemy to kneel down before God and to ask him to glorify you with the equal glory that he has in his own being. That would be horrendous. And to say, "I had, I shared your glory before time began," you would either be insane or you would be completely blaspheming. Jesus could say it because it was true. He was fully equal with God. He shares the glory of God.

Now, let's clench it with a final point: Jesus receives divine worship. He receives divine worship. I need to teach on this more than I have and I guess that's why I'm going to say it right here, right now. It's time to say these things. The Bible has a highly defined concept of the exclusivity of the worship of God. You only worship God, you don't worship anybody else. It's embedded into the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20. It says that, "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not worship them or serve them for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God," that's Exodus 20:3 and 5. "No other gods. Don't worship them. Don't serve them. I am the Lord your God and I'm a jealous God. I don't share my glory with anyone else." That's woven throughout the prophet Isaiah as well. And as a result of that, it's not surprising that when you come to the New Testament, you see wrongly directed worship being immediately and directly rebuked and stopped. "Don't do that!"

I want to show you a couple of examples. Look at Acts 10. We are kind of going a circular route to establish a very important point. Acts 10, beginning in verse 25. I'll give you a moment to turn there. Acts 10:25, Peter enters the room. We could only wish that Roman Catholics would read what I'm about to say and take heed as they fall before the false successor of Peter in their pope. It gives me the willies just thinking about it. That's a technical theological term, the willies. You want to write that down. I can give you the Greek that underlies that later, that will help you out. Acts 10:25, Peter enters into a room and this man named Cornelius met him. He knew that Peter was, you know, a representative of God, "and he fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, 'Stand up; I too am just a man.'" You can almost picture Peter grabbing him by the cloak and saying, "Stand up, don't do that! I'm just a man. You don't worship me. That's not appropriate." So then they go on and get on with life and get on with business, as it were.

Look over at Revelation 22. A different apostle, the Apostle John, here not receiving misdirected worship but giving it toward the end of his vision, having been overwhelmed by the majesty of the things that he had seen in Revelation 22:8, he says, "I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things." And the angel, this supernatural being said, "Don't do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. You worship God." So John falls down at the feet of an angel to worship and the angel says, "Stop it. We don't go there." Exodus 20, "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not worship anyone else." A man tries to worship an apostle, the apostle says, "Stop it. I'm just a man." An apostle falls down at the feet of an angel and the angel says, "Stop it. I'm just a fellow servant. You worship God alone." So you can see the clear boundaries that are drawn around where worship is to be directed, can't you? There is a border placed around to protect this unique realm of an inferior giving worship to the true superior, that it goes to God alone. Watch this: what happens when someone worships Jesus? He accepts it. He receives the worship and the Bible affirms it. What happened with the angel, what happened with the apostle, does not happen with Jesus Christ. It is a completely different response.

Look over at Matthew now, Matthew 28 with that being outlined before you. Matthew 28. We'll bring this plane in for a landing pretty soon. Matthew 28. Mark it carefully, beloved, that after the resurrection of Christ, the disciples worshiped him. Matthew 28:16, "the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee," 28:16, "the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples,'" verse 20, "'teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" There is not an element of rebuke to that false worship, what would have been false worship, I should say, if Jesus were not God. It was true worship because Jesus is God. In light of everything that Scripture says about true worship and the exclusivity of worshiping God, this can only be taken as an affirmation of the deity of Christ. They worshiped him and Scripture treats that as being perfectly appropriate.

Look over at Luke 24, beginning in verse 50 at the very end of Luke's Gospel. Luke 24:50, "Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him," worshiping Christ, "returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God." The Gospel of Luke ends on a note of the worship of Christ. That is the conclusion that that Gospel leads you to: this is what you do with the crucified and resurrected Christ, you worship him.

With that background, go now to John 20, our Gospel for this evening, and you see the Gospel of John ending on exactly the same note. Matthew ends on the note of worship. Luke ends on the note of worship. John ends on the note of worship. Not of God in general but directed toward the Lord Jesus Christ. John 20:24, we'll set up the background here. Jesus had appeared to many of the disciples but Thomas wasn't with them when that happened and so he's still having a little bit of a struggle carrying over from John 14 that we looked at earlier. Verse 24, "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were saying to him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.'" It is an emphatic rejection of the possibility that he would believe unless he has that manifestation of Christ. It is as if he's pounding the table, "I will not believe!" There is a clear emphasis in the original text so he's dead set against this idea and his pessimism is playing out.

What does the Lord do? He meets him at his point of weakness. Look at verse 27, "He said to Thomas," actually verse 26. I'm sorry. I didn't read that. "After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.'" Verse 27, "Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.'" Thomas, come out of your unbelief and believe in me. Here I am in my resurrected body. Here I am with the wounds that you asked to see. It's all right here before you, Thomas.

Look what Thomas does, verse 28, "Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'" My God. There is only one God and Thomas ascribes that deity to Christ. And what did Christ say? Was he like Peter and said, "Don't say that. Don't worship me." Was he like the angel in Revelation 22 saying, "No, worship God. Don't do that." Look at what Christ said to him in verse 29. He doesn't rebuke him, he promises blessing on those who will believe in the same way and make the same affirmation without even seeing him. Verse 29, "Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.'" Jesus affirms Thomas's statement. He says, "You have believed. You have gotten it right, Thomas. You did it in response to seeing me." He says, "Thomas, there will be people to come who will believe that without having seen me in the flesh and, oh, what a blessing upon them."

Do you realize brothers and sisters in Christ, those of you that believe in Christ like I do, do you realize that that's a blessing upon us? We haven't seen Christ physically with our eyes, have we? The Spirit of God worked in your heart in such a way that the word of God, the written word of God was sufficient, the preached Word of God was sufficient for you to believe. Jesus says, "Blessed are those that are in the position that you and I are in." We didn't require physical proof, physical sight in order to believe. For tonight, what I want you to see is that Jesus accepts this worship from Thomas. He accepts Thomas looking at him and saying, "You are my Lord and you are my God!" And Jesus says nothing to correct him.

How can he do that? How could he have someone call him Lord and God in the first singular possessive? How can he do that? By what prerogative does Jesus accept that ascription of praise and identification from a man? It's simple, it was true. It was right. Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. That's why what Thomas said was perfectly appropriate. And you see, beloved, this is how all of mankind is called upon to believe in Christ. This is not one God among many of which we are talking about. This is the one God of whom the book of Acts says, "There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved." This is the one who alone can bring us to God the Father. No one comes to the Father except through him. This is Christ. This is the Lord God Almighty in human flesh laid out in the pages of Scripture before us here this evening. This is the one who falsifies every other claim to deity, every other claim to salvation. It is exclusive. There is one God and he is only approached through Jesus Christ.

Do you know what's blessed about God among many many other things, many things are blessed about God but do you know what at this particular point is just so is especially gracious and wonderful and fills our heart to overflowing with gratitude and joy? It's that this God, it's not just that this God is the Maker of heaven and earth. Oh, he's blessed for that. It's not just that he sustains his creation. Oh, he is blessed for that. It's not just that Christ came and gave his life on the cross and has resurrected and ascended to heaven. Oh, he's blessed for that too, beloved. We could just go on and on and on. Sometime we ought to just have an all-night service giving different reasons why we could bless God. All-night wouldn't be long enough. But here in this particular instance with where we're

at right in this Gospel right now, we bless God because he recorded these things in Scripture in order that we could believe and be saved.

Look at verse 30 of John 20, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." God is blessed tonight in our midst because he graciously inspired the writing of the Gospel of John in such a way that you would have an absolutely true, absolutely reliable, absolutely infallible basis upon which to believe for the salvation of your eternal soul. Blessed be his name, that your soul could be eternally saved; that you could know that you are eternally saved; that all of your sins are forgiven through faith in Christ. God had John write this Gospel, directed him perfectly in the recording of everything that he said for the specific purpose that you could believe in Christ and be saved from your sin. And here we stand, here you sit tonight, in the blessed position of being on the receiving end of that boundless mercy and grace upon your soul and that God recorded it all in Scripture so that you could believe. And what should your belief be if you're not a Christian, if you wanted to be saved? How should you approach Christ? How should you believe? What is the content of your belief? It is so simple. Don't miss it. The content of belief is exactly what Thomas had just illustrated. You look at the Lord Jesus Christ and you call upon him with the same submission that Thomas did saying, "Lord Jesus, you are my Lord and you are my God. I bow before you. I submit to you. I receive you. I believe in you." That is the essence of saving faith.

Is that the cry of your heart in response to Christ? As you hear these things, does your heart resonate and say, "Yes, that's what I believe. Yes, that's my God. Yes, the Lord Jesus is mine and I give him the unreserved, unqualified worship that goes to God alone." That's saving faith. That's who Christ is. That's what he deserves. Blessed be his majestic name. He is God in human flesh. He is the only Savior of mankind. He invites you to come to him tonight for salvation from your sin.

Let's bow together in prayer.

Scripture says it so plainly, so clearly: if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. As a matter of historical fact, Christ died and rose again. As a matter of biblical revelation and interpretation, he died for sinners. He died for sin and now raised from the dead and ascended into heaven through the preached Word, Christ offers himself to you this evening. Come to Christ and be saved. He will save you to the uttermost.

Father, for those of us that know you, we thank you for the clarity of your word. We thank you for sending your Son in order to make yourself known and to be the Savior of the world, and we thank you from the bottom of our heart, O God, that you extended that grace to us in our sin; that you have received us as sinners; that you have cloaked us with the righteousness of Christ; that you have washed all of our sins away through the blood of Jesus your Son. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you have gone back to heaven just for a time, that as you prepare a place, it is your intention to return for us once

again, and how great the glory of that day; how great it will be to see you face-to-face; how great it will be to leave behind the sin of this world and to be glorified before you as we see you just as you are, as we see you face-to-face. Scripture says we will be like you. You will share that eternal glory with us as the culminating dispensation of your grace toward sinners. Father, we thank you that before time began you planned this out for us. We thank you that you marked us out for this gift and determined that we would receive it with certainty; that there was never a possibility that we would be lost, for those of us that are in Christ. And now you offer that gift to those who do not know you, those who are here that are still in their sin. God, may you by the power of your Holy Spirit work in their life to draw them to repentance and faith in Christ because we don't want to leave anyone behind, O God, we would have everyone join in that great hallelujah chorus with us, worshiping God through his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Be gracious to us as we go now. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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