

Well, this past week, the kiddos learned about the nature and the purpose of Jesus, and so this message today kind of fits in with that.

You know, there's a name that has permeated culture and across every religion of the world, every culture, every nation, and it's not

Buddha, and it's not Confucius, it's not Muhammad, it is not even Billy Graham, it is Jesus.

And I'm going to read to you something, and this is written by a non-believer, a history professor at Yale University,

And he writes, Regardless of what anyone may personally think or believe about him, Jesus of Nazareth has been the dominant figure in the history of Western culture for almost 20 centuries, 2,000 years.

And if it were possible, he writes, to have some sort of a super magnet to pull up out of 2,000 years of history, every scrap of metal bearing at least a trace of

of Jesus' name would there be anything left.

It is from His birth that most of the human race dates its calendars.

It is by His name that millions curse and His name that millions praise.

Think about it.

The most popular holiday is Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus.

The most popular piece of jewelry around the world is the cross.

The name behind every mountain or river or city that begins with Saint goes back to Christ.

Ninety-two percent of all the colleges and universities prior to the Civil War were started as Christian institutions.

Mechanical clocks were invented.

because monastic monks needed a way of telling time for when they should pray at regular intervals.

The first mention of eyeglasses is in a sermon about the monks needing to see more clearly and transcribe the word of God.

Many, many written languages around the world are written, took their written form because the gospel was translated into their languages.

The worship of Christ has transformed art and music and revolutionized government, abolished

slavery, provided reform, and Jesus inspired musicians and artists and thinkers and leaders from Beethoven to Tolstoy to Gandhi, from Martin Luther to Martin Luther King.

But the big question for us this morning is then, who is this man?

I mean, really, not any pat answers, but who is this man?

You see, the world is asking that question.

I was out in London.

with a team and partnering with an Anglican church there, and we were sharing the gospel.

And I remember being in a meat market area of southern London, and I was in a, just talked with people, and I got talking with one of the butchers at this sidewalk meat market, and he was from Pakistan, and he was a

practiced Islam, right?

He was a Muslim, and we began talking.

And in the conversation, you know, he said, Yes, we know about Jesus.

We love Jesus.

We Muslims, we love Jesus.

He was a great prophet.

But they only had half the story, right?

Because they don't believe that He truly died on the cross and was raised from the dead to be the sin forgiver.

They're asking a question, who is this man?

Well, if you turn in your Scriptures to Mark chapter 4, we're looking at a familiar passage of Scripture, a story, verses 35 through 41, and it asks that question.

The context is Jesus and His disciples have left a day of ministry when evening came, verse 35.

Jesus says to His disciples, let's go over to the other side, the other side of Gennesaret, or the Sea of Galilee.

Leaving the crowd behind, they took Him along just as He was in the boat.

There were also other boats with Him.

A furious squall came up and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

Jesus was in the stern,

the back of the boat, sleeping on a cushion.

The disciples woke him up and they said to him, teacher, don't you care if we drown?

Now just stop right there.

I wonder if anybody today has a question like that, not about drowning, but Jesus, don't you care that I'm going through what I'm going through?

Jesus, don't you care that I've got depression in my life and I prayed for you to take it away and I still got it?

Jesus, don't you care that I was unable to pay my bill last week?

Jesus, don't you care that this person I've been praying for passed away?

Jesus, don't you care that my marriage is on the rocks?

We ask that question a lot, right?

And we're going to see, by the way, spoiler alert, that Jesus does care about every aspect of your life.

he got up, rebuked the wind, this is verse 39, and said to the waves, Quiet, be still.

Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

Verse 40, he said to his disciples, Why are you so afraid?

Do you still have no faith?

They were terrified.

They were terrified and asked each other, Who is this?

Who is this man that even the wind and the waves obey him?

It doesn't say that they were rejoicing because they were safe now.

It says they were afraid, they were terrified.

What kind of man is this that can control nature?

And that question has been asked throughout history.

So the big question has been asked by many.

I'll point out a few.

These are all biblical references.

King Herod asked that question.

You know, the evil king who had John the Baptist beheaded.

And Jesus appeared on the scene and started doing miracles.

And so people began talking to King Herod.

And he began reasoning, is this John the Baptist that I had executed, him coming back from the dead, or is this Elijah, one of the other prophets?

Who is this guy?

Luke 9, verses 7 through 9 talk about this.

Verse 9 says, but Herod said, I beheaded John.

Who then is this I hear such things about?

Not just King Herod.

How about the religious leaders, the Pharisees?

You remember this story from Luke chapter 5.

The four friends had an invalid and they wanted him to see Jesus.

They wanted Jesus to heal him.

The problem is Jesus is teaching in Capernaum, the home base, most likely in Peter's house.

And it's full, nobody can get in.

They can't get their friend in.

So remember the story?

They go up the roof.

tear up the plaster and the thatch and the sticks and all that, and they lower him down on a mat.

And the house is packed, and Pharisees are looking in as well.

And you remember what Jesus, in an act of healing, says to this man.

He says, my son, your sins are forgiven.

Just like your sins and my sins can be forgiven through Christ.

Your sins are forgiven.

And the Pharisees, what are they doing?

They're thinking to themselves,

Verse 49 of Luke 7, Who is this?

Actually, this is Luke 5.

We'll get to Luke 9.

This is a couple chapters before.

Luke 5, Who is this man who speaks blasphemy?

Who can forgive sins but God alone?

And of course, Jesus knows what they're thinking.

And He says, What's easier, to say your sins forgiven or take up your mat?

and walk.

But now that you can see that the Son man has authority to forgive sins, I say, take up your mat and walk.

And that's what the guy did.

Within a couple chapters later, it's not the Pharisees, it's other people.

Luke 7, Jesus has been invited to Simon, the Pharisees' home, and He's there, and the people are outside in the courtyard.

They're looking in.

They can see.

They can hear.

And this sinful woman comes in.

Was she a prostitute?

Perhaps.

But she's just called the sinful woman.

And she comes in and is brave enough in repentance and total remorse to fall at the feet of Jesus.

And she's weeping.

And her tears are falling on the feet of Jesus that have not been washed.

And you can see them making little, little furrows running down, perhaps the dust on Jesus's feet.

And she's crying and she takes her hair, lets it down.

What a shameful thing for a woman in that culture.

And she wipes Jesus's feet.

And then she has this jar of perfume that was very expensive.

She breaks it open and she pours it on Jesus's feet.

And it's an act of total abandonment and worship.

That's what God wants from you when you worship Him.

And of course, the religious people are thinking, don't you know who this woman is?

What kind of a person she is?

And Jesus says to Simon, Simon, when I came in your house,

You didn't wash my feet.

You didn't anoint my head with oil.

You didn't give me the customary greeting.

And yet look at this woman.

And she's washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair and anointed my feet with

this oil.

Who is forgiven little Leslow?

Whoever's forgiven a lot, that's me, forgiven a lot, loves a lot.

And as this is going on, of course, the people there, the Pharisees and others, when He says to her, verse 48, Woman, your sins are forgiven.

The other people murmured, Who is this who even forgives sins?

Well, Jesus in John 19 stands before Pilate.

Remember this, and He's interrogated by Pilate.

And Pilate's trying to figure out what's going on.

The Jews are saying, crucify Him.

He's guilty.

He has Jesus flogged, whipped, a crown of thorns on His head.

He's bleeding.

He's bruised.

And the Pharisees say, when Pilate says, He's not guilty, I find no guilty in Him.

They say, He's guilty of blasphemy because He claims to be the Son of God.

At that point, Pilate got afraid.

And what was his words to him?

In verse 8 of John 19, Where do you come from?

he said to Jesus.

Where do you come from?

So many are asking that question today.

Is Jesus really just a prophet?

Is He a preacher?

Is He a reformer?

Certainly He's all those things, but is He the Son of God?

What's most important, of course, is not the questions.

It's the big question.

It's the big answer.

So let's look back at the responses of people recorded in the Holy Scriptures as testimony about who Jesus really is.

How about the prophet Isaiah?

The famous chapter of Isaiah 53, where God gave Isaiah a word of knowledge.

He gave him the word of the Lord.

And it was a prophecy of who this coming Messiah would be.

And it did not refer to the nation of Israel, as some Jews claim today.

It referred to the coming Messiah.

And there Isaiah writes this, he was pierced.

for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

We all like sheep have gone astray, each turning to our own way, and God has laid on Him the iniquities of us all.

The sin bearer, the sin forgiver, Jesus.

That was Isaiah's answer.

Who is Jesus?

the demons gave an answer in Mark chapter 1, 21 through 26.

The Bible says that Jesus went back to His home base, Capernaum.

And when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and He begins to teach.

And Susan and I have been in the remnants.

They've excavated this synagogue.

And

It's not very big.

So if Jesus is standing in the center teaching, it's about as big as this area, this stage area here.

And then there were seats for men, seats for women.

So Jesus is teaching there.

And Scripture says that the people were amazed at His teaching because He taught as one with authority, not like they're teachers of the law.

And then verse 23 says, Then a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit, all of a sudden he jumps up and he cries out, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' Verse 25, Jesus says, 'Be quiet.

Come out of him.' The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

So the demons had no question of who this man was because those demons, the fallen angels, knew of Jesus in His pre-incarnate state as second person of the Trinity.

They knew all about Jesus.

They didn't worship Him.

They didn't love Him.

They didn't obey Him.

They were against Him.

And for their ruler, Satan,

but they knew his identity and they declared it, and not just here.

You notice in the New Testament record that when people who were possessed by demons came in contact with Jesus, they declared who Jesus was.

Well, how about not a fallen angel, but an archangel, Gabriel, Luke 1.

You know the story, the angel comes to Mary and says, don't be afraid, you found favor with God, you're going to be with child,

You're going to give birth to a son, and you're to give him the name Jesus.

He will be great, will be called the Son of the Most High.

Conversation continues, and Mary says, How can this be?

How can this happen?

I'm a virgin.

The angel answered, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

So the One, the Holy One, to be born

will be called the Son of God.

Well, not just angel, an angel or demons, but how about a disciple?

The Apostle Peter's confession in Mark 16.

We call it the great confession.

I've preached on this before here.

You know, they go to Caesarea, Philippi, up north, and there they are staying with Jesus, looking at all the shrines

There's a temple to Caesar.

There's a temple to Pan, the goat god, the god of panic.

There's another one.

There's another one.

And in all of this multiculturalism, with all these supposed gods, Jesus asked, Who do people say that I am?

And you know the reply.

Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, others Jeremiah, one of the prophets.

But what do you say?

That's the question, right?

Who do you say I am?

And Peter jumps up and says, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Kids, that's what we call the great confession, yes?

There's a great commandment.

There's a great confession.

And Jesus says, Simon, you're blessed because only God in heaven revealed this to you.

What about those who weren't believers, not just the disciples?

How about the Roman centurion, Matthew 27?

You remember the story.

Jesus is hanging there on the cross, and it says, When the centurion and those with Him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that happened, what else happened?

The earthquake, it grew dark, the rumble,

of the skies and the earth and the earthquake.

And we also know what was going on in the temple, right?

The curtains split down, top to bottom, in two.

And this was terrifying.

And this Roman centurion, the one, the soldier, the hardened soldier in charge of 100 other soldiers, exclaimed, Surely he was the Son of God.

How about his second cousin, a relative?

What would he say about Jesus?

When John 1, we see the confession of John the baptizer.

The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

I love this.

That's my Jesus.

Is He yours?

He takes away the sins of the world.

Well,

There's another John, not John the Baptist, but John the Apostle.

And in 1 John, we see this, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the word of life.

What's he talking about?

This is John's personal testimony, having been with Jesus in his three-year ministry.

Those things we have heard, this amazing authoritative teaching by Jesus, the things we've seen with our eyes.

Can you imagine him thinking back, well, all the things I've seen.

I was with Jesus when we're going out of the town of Nain and there's this funeral procession and this only son of a widow woman died and they're carrying his coffin out of town.

Jesus goes up and touches the coffin and that dude sits up.

raised from the dead.

Our eyes, my eyes saw that, which we have looked at.

That's a different Greek word, and it means more than just a glance.

It means to experience.

It goes back to today's story, being in the boat with the wind and the waves that had come down over the mountains that surround the Sea of Galilee, and they think they're going to capsize, and Jesus commands everything to stop, and it does.

John experienced that, the things we have touched, eating with Jesus after His death, burial, and resurrection, touching Him.

John is saying, Listen, this is my testimony.

I've seen it.

I was there.

All of this.

I'm giving to you that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

He further writes in John 1, you know this one, In the beginning, he gets more theological here, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Through Him all things were made.

That takes it to another level, doesn't it?

Without Him, nothing was made that has been made.

In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

The darkness could not overtake it.

The darkness cannot overcome it.

Paul reflects that same thing.

The Christian killer turned believer and missionary and church planter in Colossians 1.

He, Jesus, is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

For by Him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

Whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by Him and for Him.

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

That sounds like Jesus is more than a prophet to me.

So what do you say about Jesus?

What do you believe about Jesus?

I mean, really, not the church answer.

Is Jesus all those things I've been describing to you in your daily life?

Because if He is, you've got some power.

You've got some influence.

Well, let's have a faith story.

So Jack Bush agreed to come up and let me interview him.

I'm going to grab a microphone here.

Thanks for being willing to talk with me.

It's microphone 3.

Hello.

Yeah.

So thanks, man.

You're a brave dude.

So I just want to ask you that sub-question, you know, like, who is this man to you?

So the first question is, how did you begin to see your need to put your trust in Jesus?

How did that happen?

So, testing.

So,

The night I got arrested, I was at my lowest point in my life.

I was in this thing called the pickle suit.

It's just like a Velcro thing and it only goes down there.

The rest of you is just there.

And I remember being in a room with a hole, just long story short, like the lowest point in my life.

And

I never really prayed or believed up to that point.

And I just remember just being so broken and just asking God for a sign.

Like if you're real and Jesus is who he says he is, show me a sign.

And just in that moment, this tremendous weight of everything just got released off me.

And I felt peace in that moment.

And from that point on, I knew that everything that all these Christians were saying in my life was real.

God's real.

Jesus is the Lord and Savior.

And I could put my faith in him.

Yeah, man, that's a great story.

So then tell us how and when you trusted Christ then, and then you were baptized.

Tell us about that.

So I wasn't baptized for, I want to say like four years after that point, because I was in prison during that time and we had a group of Christian brothers get together and express the need to be baptized.

And I was, yes, absolutely.

And that was, for me, just saying, hey, Jesus, like, this is for you, not for me, but because baptism represents, a proclamation to the world, I'm walking with Christ.

And up to that point, I kind of, it was kind of lackadaisical in my faith, but it made it more serious.

You know what I mean?

Yeah.

Man, that's great.

So, final question.

So what?

So how is this living, eternal Son of God, God the Son, what difference does he make in your daily life?

He's the one that gives me hope for tomorrow, because tomorrow's not guaranteed.

So I know even if I get taken home, you know what I mean?

I'm welcome.

He's my teacher.

He's the example.

I don't always do the best job of following, but he's there to lead and guide.

Each time I fall, he's the first one that picks me up.

You know what I mean?

Because I fall and don't...

What's the word?

You know, I strive for Jesus.

You know what I mean?

He's the first one to be like, hey, I'm right here with you.

And when I can't walk the walk, he picks me up and bringing me along with him until I'm ready to walk with him again.

He's like, hey, I'm still here.

right there beside you.

Amen.

Man, that's great.

Why don't you give him a round of applause?

Thank you, Jack.

He changes lives.

But you know, all of this that we've been talking about is great in its truth, and we should celebrate it.

But if Jesus didn't claim the same thing, we'd be in trouble, yes?

So as we finish this up,

Let's see what Jesus says about Himself, what He claimed.

In Mark 14, we read that Jesus is, He's standing before the high priest at that time, right?

In His trial, before His crucifixion.

And the high priest asks Him, Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?

I am.

Now that is packed.

I am, said Jesus, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.

That's the statement.

He's coming again.

I hope you're praying, Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus.

But it wasn't only just then.

In John 8, in verses 23 and 24 and 56 and 58, we read He's still on trial, right?

And he says this to the high priest and the other religious leaders, you are from below.

I am from above.

You are of this world.

I am not of this world.

Your father, Abraham, rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day.

He saw it and was glad.

And then they replied back, they pushed back, you're not even 50 yet.

And you have seen Abraham.

Remember Jesus' reply?

I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am.

I am that I am.

It was God's answer to Moses when Moses said, God, what's your name?

As he spoke to that burning bush, I am that I am.

And if you break down that phrase in the Hebrew, it can also mean, I will be who I will be.

He's the one in authority.

And Jesus used that title.

The 7 I am statements in the Gospel of John.

I am the bread of life.

I am the light of the world.

I am the door.

I'm the good shepherd.

I'm the resurrection and the life.

I'm the way, the truth, and the life.

I'm the true vine.

So what kind of man is this?

Well, today Jesus asked that same question of you.

for your personal daily life.

Who do you say today that I am?

And how are you going to live that out?

Well, the prophets from 800 years before Jesus was even born had answered that question.

They recorded 300 specific prophecies about His life, His death, His ministry, His resurrection, hundreds of years before He was born.

Again, the demons could answer that question.

The disciples could answer that question, but what about you?

Because the scary thing is indecision.

The scary thing is saying, I'm going to put off living for Christ at some future time when I'm done having fun.

I'm not ready to make a decision.

That was the decision of Pilate, the governor.

He saw the evidence.

He had heard stories.

He was interviewing Jesus.

He's one who condemned Jesus to death.

And yet his only response was basically, Where do you come from?

And really, Jesus, what is truth?

It's a dangerous thing.

So I've encouraged you this morning, even though I'm preaching to church folk, have you ever truly made the decision to confess Jesus Christ?

9 says, If you confess with your mouth, what?

Jesus is Lord.

That means Jesus is God, not a prophet, not just the Son of God.

If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Does anybody need to make that confession today?

You can do it.

You can call out right now as I'm finishing up my message and say, Jesus, I do want to confess you.

I believe that you are the Son of God and God the Son, the perfect Savior who died for my sins.

I give you my life.

I give you my all.

I want to follow you for the rest of my life.

Forgive me of my sins.

Come in and you be the Lord and leader of my life.

You can also confess Christ by the way that you

Let others know that you're following Him.

That's your weekday confessions of letting others know that you're a believer.

It's by being baptized.

If you've never been baptized after you trusted Christ by immersion, we would love to do that.

You can confess Christ by joining a local body of Christ like this one and saying, I'm going to stand next to you, shoulder to shoulder, arm in arm.

We're going to make a difference in our community.

You can confess Christ that you're a Christ follower to your friends, your coworkers, your classmates, your relatives, your neighbors.

Because here is the deal.

The end of the story.

Revelation 22.

Jesus says, Behold, I am coming soon.

My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.

Jesus ends with this, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

I think I'm going to trust this guy.

I think I'm going to trust the historical records, the testimony by those who love Jesus and by those who hate Jesus.

And I'm going to be one who calls Him Lord.

Amen?