



JOHN: JESUS, THE AWE-INSPIRING

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John 12:20-12:26

You're listening to a sermon from Doxa Church in this, the third installation of our gospel John series we'll take a look at the upside down nature of our Messiah, the many prophecies of his death and resurrection and the unstoppable nature of God's redemptive plan for the salvation of his people. For more information about Doxa or to join us for a Sunday gathering, go to doxa-church.com.

Please stand for the reading of God's word. Today We'll be reading John 12 verses 20 through 26. Now, among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So they came to Philip who was from Bethesda in Galilee and asked him, sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip went and told Andrew, Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus and Jesus answered them. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies. It remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life, loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me. And where I am there, my servant will be also, if anyone serves me, the father will honor him. This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Well, good afternoon. My name is Eddie. If you're new, so glad to meet you all, at least from a distance. I'm the lead teaching pastor here with Doxa. I get really excited around the youth stuff. Can we just like, can I just hear a clap for Natalie and the, and the team? Like, yes. Like if you're, if you're a part of that crew and you are here and you're maybe you're in high school or middle school or even elementary school, Hey, we love you. We're we, we trust Natalie and their leadership. It's gonna be a ton of fun. So I participate in that ministry. If you wanna be involved in that, you've got like that bubbly personality that Natalie has. Uh, you should also join because

we need you cuz there that'll be exciting to them as well. And so we want you to be a part of that please.

Okay. We are in week three of our several week series in the book of John, this is part three of a four year four part commitment that Doxa has undertaken to unpack the book. Okay. So over yeah, I'll lot. Right? So over the next several weeks, we're gonna be going through chapters 12 through 15. So we find ourselves smacked out in the middle of chapter 12. If you have that Bible, if you have an app, please go, um, to that verse 20 in chapter 12, I'm gonna pray for us. Sort of set the mood, ask the spirit to be present with us and then we will get right into it.

Well, Lord God, you're in control. We believe that. And as I unpack, uh, man, wow, I'm unpacking something like awe what it means to be in awe of you Lord. And I'm sure, hoping that I have the eyes to see you today right now. So I can preach to my friends, my brothers and sisters and Lord. I pray for all of us here that the spirit might be present, that we might experience some awe today. And we're awed by your word. We're awed by your presence. We're awed by your glory. We're awed by will I pray that all of those things over us. So, and I do pray heavily again, a hedge of protection for all the people in here. Lord God that as we unpack something like awe inevitably, uh, spiritual warfare can ensue. And so we pray against those things and we pray for open hearts and open minds.

We love you in his name. Amen. Okay. So over the last few weeks you've been hearing me unpack my own story a little bit. Let me continue the theme. When I first encountered Jesus, if you were here the last few weeks you heard me, uh, share the fact that I started getting to know Jesus by reading the book of John. So I started on reading John going through it, hitting all of the, the major key passages, right? John 3:16, all of that stuff. And there was this one moment in my room as I was reading this in one sitting, I remember this sort of both an exciting, but also a sort of a, uh, an uncomfortably fearful, uh, moment kind overcome me all at once. It was exciting. It was fearful. It was both. And I didn't know what to do with that moment.

And it happened as I was reading over John, uh, chapter eight. Now just for a background for those of you that are new, I didn't know anything about Jesus. I was just reading the book. I had no clue who Jesus was. I heard his name. I know what Christmas is, but that's kind of the extent of it. I didn't know a lot about it. And so, um, as I was reading it all, this was new information for me. And I came with it from a very different world view from the secular bay area. And I'm just reading this book. And so as I get to this, John, uh, this passage in John chapter eight, Jesus said this, and maybe you've probably heard it. If you maybe you've heard it, Jesus says, if you abide me, you are my disciples. And then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

Maybe you've heard that passage, right? And then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. And as I read that, it overwhelmed me because I had a framework from which I understood the world. I understood the world a specific way. I didn't, I, I had no other idea about, about the world. Other than what I had learned. I learned that the world is harmful. It's a harsh place to live. It's difficult to be alive here. It's hard to pay the bills eventually you die. That was my framework. But like other people they were doing well, but my life not so great. So as I over overcame that, and I read this first, I felt this cold wave of energy hit me. It was freaky. It was overwhelming. Like it was. And here's how I kind of understood what was happening. Especially as I was reading the text, Jesus said, if you believe me, you'll know the truth and the truth, will set you free.

And I was thinking free from what? And I was like, oh, free from the captivity of the way. I've always seen the world free from my own sin, my own darkness inside me free from all of these things from the free, from the captivity of my own mind, my self limiting thoughts, everything, Jesus has the key to everything and he unlocked it all on me on that, on that afternoon, Saturday afternoon, I remember like it was yesterday and it was almost like my hair stood on edge. Like goosebumps I mean, you ever, ever get those goosebumps? You know, you're like, woo. Right. Some of you got 'em right now. It's cold in here. I'm sweating so much larger than you. Most likely though, given what's in the crowd tonight. Um, are you laughing, Sarah? And my wife's laughing and it over hit me. There was goosebumps everywhere.

I was like a feeling like, oh my gosh, it was a cold wave of energy. It overwhelmed me because Jesus was freeing me from something in that moment, and it, I was in awe of Jesus. And that's the best way I could put it. I felt like a sense of awe overwhelm me now. I, again, you hear me struggling to define this because really awe is nearly impossible thing to define, but if you've experienced it, you know what I'm talking about? Does that make sense? You get it. You know, if you've sort of like a combination of amazement and wonder mixed together, but it's kind of more than that too. You know, awe is also one of the few concepts that help reconfigure our sense of time. If you've ever been in a, a moment of, oh, you're like, oh my gosh, you forget what time it is.

You don't even know what time it is. It immerses us in the present moment. You're not thinking about your past. You're not thinking about your future, your future. You were just right there in the present. It's overwhelming. It's crazy. You, it hits you all at once. Now. I went down a rabbit hole since I, since I felt that moment of awe and I came across this passage and I was like, I wanna know more about this idea of awe. And to my surprise, there are hundreds, if not thousands of research papers written on awe. In fact, there are people that get their literal PhDs in studying this concept. There is so much work that someone can go five years and write a dissertation on trying to experience this concept. That's how, that's how powerful it's. So I found one definition by a guy named Dr.

Keltner and I'll put it up. This is what he says, awe is. It's the sensation of being in the presence of something vast that simultaneously transcends one's understanding of the world. A state of being that straddles the boundary of pleasure and fear. So awe transcends our frame of reference changes, all of that, right? It combines again, amazement with an edge of fear. It dissolves our sense of self. All of these things, you know, it's funny about this. As I read it, psychologists, well actually secular psychologists. They will call awe an emotion and maybe technically it is, but they'll call awe an emotion. But if you've ever experienced awe you know that it feels vastly different from being angry at someone or being sad or feeling hurt or shame vastly different or even excited. The key difference I think is that oftentimes emotions are internal responses to what happens to us or what we're thinking or what we're feeling.

But awe, bear with me. If you've experienced, it feels external. It feels as if something is happening to you or overcoming you. Why is that? Well, it maybe a secular psychologist might not say this, but as a pastor, I'll say this that's because God is the author of awe. He is author. God is the author of awe and he's its chief manufacturer. So he crafts it. And then he is the one that presents it. Now, if you've ever sort of hiked to an amazing height, maybe you've been, uh, to Mount SI or maybe you've God bless you. Maybe you've been all the way up to mount Rainier. You've done some crazy things. Or you've been to the top, let's say something easier.

The Willis tower in Chicago, or maybe then the space needle and start small, or the Ferris wheel. Maybe you felt a sense of awe overcome you, or maybe you've stood on the foot of the grand canyon and felt how small you are.

That overwhelming sense. If you felt any of those things, you felt awe the same feeling that I've experienced in my room that day. What's weird about all of this is that Jesus himself invoked that same awe. When he wrote into Jerusalem on a donkey, the one we talked about last week and he overwhelmed Israel and hit em with a wave of a wave of awe in all of Israel, the hundreds of thousands of people there were overwhelmed by his presence and felt the world stand still nothing in the past matter, nothing in the present or nothing in the future mattered. And now of course, as a response to that, we saw last week that the world and all of its people had taken notice and gone after Jesus, not just Israel, of course, Jesus inspire awe which he often does and it wouldn't be Jesus, Jesus, wouldn't be Jesus. If he didn't stir us up and then call us to something more than we expected, that's kind of how, how he likes to do things.

So as we unpack these, these few verses here, 20 through 26, we're gonna learn just how awe inspiring Jesus is. And we're gonna also learn what it might cost us to follow him in that awe. Now, if Jesus is awesome, which is awesome, as he seems, at least it's gonna be worth it. So bear with me, even if you don't know Jesus, okay, what do we learn in this passage? Here's the first thing we learn is that Jesus action creates awe in us. Remember, okay, I want, this is really, and I want you to understand this. It is Jesus action of writing in on a donkey that creates the wave of awe over Jerusalem. So the people didn't decide to be in awe of Jesus.

Okay. They didn't decide to give out awe. They didn't even respond to Jesus coming with their own. Awe. The awe was like a tsunami. Overwhelming them. There's nothing they could do. You see? Jesus' action brings awe, we didn't just notice God. And he became awesome. Okay. God is awesome. And he overwhelms us with his presence and his awesomeness. And then we respond as a result. That's what happens. So Jesus action brings off. So what were the ramifications of that verse 20? It says now among those who went up to worship to the, at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip who was from Bethesda in Galilee and asked him, sir, we wish to see Jesus. Now it says Greeks here. Okay. These weren't actual Greeks from Greece, as we would think a Greek might be, seems like fair assumption. Right? Well, but these were actually Gentiles from Greek speaking, sort of the Greek speaking world around Jerusalem.

Okay. So they were culturally Greek, but they don't weren't necessarily from Greece. That's helpful because it's, they're Gentiles meant much like us were Gentiles that helps us sort of understand in the story, but what's most important then who they actually are is that who they're not. And it's that they're not Jews, they're not Israelites. And Israelite is a person who comes from the line of Israel. Okay. Israel is Jacob. Jacob is Abraham, the father of the Jewish faith's grandson. Okay. So if you're an Israelite, you have come from that line. They're just as a matter of fact, okay. It's not as if you are grafted in it's that you were born along that line. And so these Gentiles are not Israelites and therefore the coming king of Israel wouldn't normally be all that much, much of an interest to them like, oh, those are Israel.

That's the Israelite king. I am not an Israelite. That's great for them. This is a lot going on here, but that's not related. It's like, there's a picnic at the park and you see a family going crazy and fighting you're oh, that's, that's unfortunate, but not my family. Okay. Don't care. Or you get your phone out and you film, if you're, you know, under 19, you put it on snap- or what's TikTok,

right? Gosh, I almost said Snapchat, is that going? Shows you where I'm at, shows you where I'm at. So the point is, they're not, they are not Jews. They are Gentiles. And yet we find that this sort of witnessing as they witness Jesus come, they Jesus coming on the donkey with, with all of his Israel, as they watched it, they actually too were hit with the tsunami of awe.

So even though they weren't Israelite, they were also hit with this wave of awe. And what we find in the next passage is that this, this sense of awe over them with the Gentiles is actually strategic by God. That nothing that Jesus does or happens to Jesus is an accident. Okay? Look at verse 22 and 23, 23 will be on the board. It says Philip he's. One of the disciples went and told Andrew another disciple. And Andrew and Phillip went up and told Jesus. And then Jesus says this, Jesus answered them. The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Okay. Let me set the scene. Jesus rides in on a donkey. I don't know what he does after that. Probably lots of stuff has happened in between, right? These Greeks. They go, wow, this guy's pretty amazing. Like I'm in awe. I, I, I think I need to be a part of whatever's happening here.

So they go find a couple disciples and they go, oh, I, I don't necessarily know what to do with this you're Greek. Huh? Can you be an Israel--I don't know what that means for you. Let's go bring him to Jesus. And they go to Jesus, Hey, uh, some Greeks want you. And Jesus says, now has the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified? Like, whoa, that's a lot. Right? He didn't say, Hey, great. Bring them in. Let's let's let's talk to 'em or oh, tell 'em I love them. I can't talk right now. He didn't do any of that. He said the hour has now come. What is he talking about? Well, if you follow the book of John, you know that the up until now Jesus has only said the hour has not yet come in fact, that's all he said this entire time.

And I'm sure everyone's getting frustrated. Like the hours not come the hours not come the hours not come. And all of a sudden the Gentiles come to Jesus and he goes, oh, the hours come. That's crazy. So this tells us that this awe that came over the Gentiles is actually intentional. And Jesus understands that the, the Gentiles coming to him, a sign, it's a symbol that it is time for him to begin his deeper work, which he explains in the next verse, verse 24. And by the way, he does it in a very confusing way. At least for us verse 24, truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies. It remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Okay. He starts a sentence with truly, truly. Do you remember that when Jesus repeats truly, truly.

He's about to say something really important, right? Think of an exclamation point. But even more than that, it's it's really, really important. So that's so get ready. Okay. And so he essentially is saying this grain. If it's held in the Palm of a hand, it would not ever see what it's gonna be capable of. It would die and nothing that is inside of it would ever get out. But if it, if it dies, it must be buried in dirt, right? Like a grain would have to be buried in dirt. If it's a good seed, it will sprout millions of offspring. Just like it. It will bear fruit. Okay. That's what's gonna happen. So with this analogy, Jesus is saying, I must die. I am the grain. And if I die millions and millions and billions of people will live, Jesus said, I'm gonna die for you.

Not just them. All of you. Jesus came to die. Christ Bible says, Paul Paul says in the book of Romans Christ died for the ungodly. That's us. He died for all of us so that we might experience eternal life in him. It's a powerful moment. Now I'll just be straight with you. If I was one of these disciples that would've caught me off guard, I've heard Jesus say a bunch. He was gonna die or something, but I'm like, no, I just watched him walk in on a donkey. Israel's chanting. He's

getting ready to do something big. But if you remember Israel thought Jesus was there not to die, but to free the Israelites from Roman impression.

So they were really confused when he said he was about to die again, this time in sort of a, a parable for him. And that leads me to say this. The awe we experience of Jesus is always a about, more than what we expect. It's always about more than what we expect. You see, they, the awe they experienced at Jesus was about deliverance from their, from their greatest enemy Rome. When Jesus came to deliver 'em from their greatest enemy themselves in their own sin and destruction, that's what Jesus came to solve for. It's way bigger than what we always think. I don't know what you think of Jesus, but I can assure you his plan for your life and plan for Doxa is far larger than anything we've ever conjured up. It just is. I don't care how faithful you are. I don't care if you pray two hours every single morning at 3:00 AM, you set your alarm, you get on your knees and you are the most perfect person.

Jesus has far more in store for his people than anything. Any human being has ever conjured up. I can assure you that. And it is absolutely coming. So when we experience the awe of Jesus and listen, I believe that he's trying to help us in things. Okay? Yeah, God, I do. I believe God wants to help you find a boyfriend. Maybe sometimes get a better job. Sure. Maybe even cure your illness or help you pay rent. I think that he might be doing all those things, but if he does do them for you, he is demonstrating your deliverance from eternal destruction to you. And that is a gift and an example of what he's ultimately doing in you and through you in this life and the next life. Right. He's doing a lot now. I don't know about you, but I kinda get I fire. I get fired up.

I want some of that. Like, I've got a lot going on in my, I could use some of that, man. I would love to be stripped of my anxieties. I would love to be stripped from all sorts of things. That would be great if God could deliver me and he can and listen, we could all admit it. We want more of it, but is a few sort of caveats and it wouldn't be Jesus. If there wasn't, here's the first one we can't submit to Jesus. If we're in awe of the world. Oh, okay. Well that's challenging. Cause some of the things I was asking for actually, yeah, maybe they kind of, they don't seem to fit. You may heard Jesus say you can't serve two masters. Right? Have you heard him say that you can't serve two masters? You can't ride two horses with one butt.

Okay. Have you heard him say that? No, he hasn't. That's me. No, I'm just kidding. That's actually. Yeah. That's from somebody. I forget. Someone's smart. It's true. You can't do it. So if you're in awe of the world in awe of Jesus, oftentimes those two things are competing factors. Now, listen, I'm not saying you can't be in awe of amazing things in the world. I'm not saying that your daughter or son being born or an amazing sunset, isn't worth being in awe over. Obviously it is because awe happens to you. But those things can actually be representative of our awe for Jesus instead of being in competition. So when we are, uh, our, our awe of Jesus is in competition where our awe of the world. Then we really miss the mark. And this is where Jesus starts to go really deep, really deep. So he starts sort of everyone here, that's sort of casually trying to understand Jesus at this moment.

He, he likes to call em out here's verse 25, whoever loves his life, loses it. And I don't think I need to read on that's a lot. Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it though for eternal life. Okay? First thing Jesus is not saying you have to hate your spouse or your family or your job or even a hobby. Okay? It's not what he's saying. But when he says, whoever loses his life, he means if you delight in your life more than God, so to speak. And when he says, whoever hates

his life, he means, think so little of your life and so much of God that by comparison, you would just give your life up for him. That's what he means. And some of you were like, oh, this is perfect. First to me. I mean, this should be my life first.

I absolutely hate my life. This is great. I can't stand my job. Like I feel like I'm a great Christian. That's not what he meant. Okay. He didn't mean, oh, I hate my life. Oh, you know? Oh, woe is me. I'm doing good. Right. I'm Eeyore-ing around the house and things are good. Like that's not, that's not what he meant. What Jesus is saying is that we cannot love this world more than him and still be in awe of him. Actually. It's very much impossible to do so, but many of us do live as if this world is all there is, let's be honest. And we all do it from moment to moment. We all do it from moment to moment. But a lot of us do, even regardless of what, like you say about your faith. I am a Christian. I am a Muslim.

I am, uh, a secular humanist. I I'm an atheist. I'm a agnostic, whatever we say, we oftentimes do live If this world is all there is, but regardless of what we believe about God. So I wanna pose this to you as a hypo hypothetical list to illustrate totally hypothetical. If you find yourself in it, pure coincidence. Okay? So here's my first list. It goes like this. If this world is all there was, we might. Okay. What, when we might do, if this world is all there was first thing, build heaven on earth, in the form of comfort, food trips, real estate satisfaction, job title, prestige, honor, sex food.

If this world was all there was, we also might consume over contribute. We might focus in, on buying, getting and building because why not? This is world is all there is. I might as well, suck 'er dry might as well. Do it, take it for all she's worth. Those are the resources. If this world is all there was, we also might seek retribution over forgiveness. Yeah. That one, because listen, there's no afterlife. What do you need to forgive somebody for? And we say, oh man. But I think forgiveness is still like a core idea. Listen, oftentimes we'll say, and I'll do this myself. I'll say I need an apology. But really when we ask for an apology or when we're, we're giving one in that moment, it's actually more about us being made whole than it is us forgiving them. Right? Forgiveness is not payback for the wrongs.

We've done. It's a canceling of the debt. But oftentimes when we look at forgiveness, we're like, I want an apology. I demand it. And what we want is retribution. We actually don't want forgiveness. Next thing, if this all there, if all this, if this world was all there was, we might disassociate and ignore death because who wants to think about the end of this awesome wild ride or this amazingly terrible wild ride. If this world was all there was, we might make much of ourselves as possible. It's only about our legacy, not our family legacy as God calls us to, but our own personal, I gotta leave a statue out front my office. I, I gotta build, I gotta get my stats up. I gotta, I gotta earn, I gotta leave a mark on this company. I gotta, I got a leave a mark on this school. I've got, I've gotta find my place in the world. I'm gonna die with as many TikTok followers as I can.

One of the most, I'll just be straight with you. One of the weird, most bizarre things of the social media age is when people die that have large social media accounts. I dunno if you've seen this, but it's really uncomfortable because you see this sort of like just yesterday, they said something. And normally if you don't know the person, you're kind of disassociated from them, but then you kind of hear, oh, they died. And then there's just this like sort of that's their legacy is these 4.1 million followers and some cat memes. And you're like, oh man, it's kind of sad. It is sad. Okay.

Next list. So we said, if this world was all there was, we might and I gave you five. But if this world was all there was we wouldn't okay. We wouldn't, we wouldn't lay our life down for others.

Why in the heck would I do that? I mean this, if this, this life is all there is why would I sacrifice my own wellbeing? I've gotta maximize my time. If this world was all there was, we wouldn't give sacrificially and generously. Now listen, you might say, oh no, I don't know if that's true. I mean, I might give and yeah, I think you might give, but usually if we do give in a scenario like that, we will give from time to time. But we will. If it's a part of our main part of our lives, we'll only give if it makes us feel important. If it makes us feel happy. If it makes us feel vindicated. Somehow, if it gives us honor, if we get to name the wing, the west wing off of, or the east wing of the, of the campus after us, and we sort of leave a legacy if this world was all there was, we wouldn't turn the other cheek to an enemy.

Seriously. What's the point of turning the other cheek. If this world was all there was why not just cut 'em off, who cares? Right? Like they've damaged me. They're challenging me. And listen, I'm not saying hang around abusive people. That's not what you hear me saying. But anyone who has small amounts of conflict with you, or even challenging amounts of conflict, isn't your enemy. And isn't always trying to destroy you. And if everyone in your life is trying to destroy you, that's a sure sign that you shouldn't cut them off. But of course, if this world was all there was we wouldn't turn the other cheek. What's the reason to do that. If this world was all there, uh, there was, we wouldn't embrace death as a glorious transfer to eternity because eternity's not real. And if this world was all there was, we wouldn't live for a purpose greater than ourselves, because what would be greater than living my own life and living my best life. Now, what would be greater than eating the best foods and going to the best restaurants and going on the best vacations and enjoying life to the full, to the fullest what could be the most important. Now I'm not saying all those things are bad, but can we put the first list back up? I do wanna ask you a serious question.

I want you to really consider this too, by the way out of those two sides, which set of points looks more like your life. This one, if this world was all there was, we might does your life look like this? Build heaven on earth, consume over, contribute, seek retribution and forgiveness disassociate and ignore death, right? Make as much of ourselves as possible. Does your life look like that one? Or does your life look like this? Lay our life down for others, give sacrificially and generously. Turn the other cheek to an enemy, embrace death as a transfer to glorious eternity and live for a purpose greater than ourselves. Which side does your life look like?

If we follow Jesus, we know which one it's supposed to look like, but oftentimes we find ourselves on the other side. Do you believe there's more to your existence than this life? When we properly assess God's divine will for our lives. When we're overcome with powerful unobtrusive, awe over our spirits because of him, this world doesn't seem as important. All right, what else do we learn? Okay, here's our next thing. So we know that we can't submit to Jesus if we're in awe of the world, but we also can't submit to Jesus. If we are in awe of ourselves. Now we often think of possessions and others and money as sort of the things that we're in awe of, you know what I'm saying? Like it's always something else, right? Someone else shooting a three pointer or scoring a touchdown or, or hitting it big by shorting that company or these big giant goals.

I mean of all what they're doing, or man, that guy, that woman, that house, that state, that political party or affiliation, all of those things we're in awe. But actually it's easy to forget that the largest obstacle to being in awe of Jesus is often us. We're often our own worst enemies. Again, let's put verse 25 up. Here's what Jesus says. Again. Whoever loves his life, loses it. Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it from eternal life for eternal life. You know, Western cultures have been so self infatuated, right? The focus is on the self. You guys all know this, cause we all do this. We swim in this. You know, they often say, if you want to know about the water, don't ask the fish. Well, I'm gonna try to be the fish today. Cuz we swim in this world. Okay? Listen up, focus on the self.

How I look right? How I'm perceived or even more recently, how I feel inside. That's what matters, how I want to be addressed. How comfortable can I be? These are all things that we think about, right? And the self even has become so elevated that we're actually no longer even to take responsibility for how we react to another's action. We, we say, we feel unsafe by another's action. They put me in danger. I'm unsafe. If we're triggered it's because someone pulled our trigger, they triggered me with their antics. The other side of the coin is this self idea of self actualization. How I improve, how I grow, how I achieve, right? It's by the way, it's really easy to mock this behavior like, oh man, this is totally right. Amen. I feel it like, oh man, there's so much junk out there today. Amen. Jesus.

I am a Christian and yes, praise God, if you are, we love you. But we can oftentimes do the exact same things. But with Christian stickers on 'em Christian coding on our lives, we can turn the Bible into a motivational manual, how to better our lives. You know what I'm talking about, Lord, I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Absolutely. Those verses are a little different than how you just quoted 'em but that's okay. If we highlight self over God, we often miss the point. The challenge for many who are Christians is that Christianity sometimes is sort of packaged like this to us in our churches. So it makes it tough. So a Christianity, without us in the center is difficult to understand like how do I understand Christianity? If it's not all about me? Like I don't get that.

Yeah. That's a red pill moment. Christianity is not about us individually. It's about us collectively responding to the good work of Jesus. That's what the Bible's about. So we, we don't understand it. It's challenging for us. Church gatherings are not for life coaching an audience on their way to self-actualization. That is for Tony Robbins and other wealthy people to do. And they're a lot better at it. If you need life coaching, go to Tony Robbins. He jumps on a trampoline, gets in a cold pool before he gets on stage. He's hyper. It's better. That's not what the church is for though. It's only until we know who he is that we actually can follow him and learn who we are. Does that make sense? There's this wonderful quote by a woman godly woman named Jen Wilkin. Wanna read it to you? Cuz it man, it speaks to what I'm saying.

Listen to what she says. You can tell me that I'm a Royal daughter of a king. You can assure me that I am God's poem and his masterpiece. You can tell me that I stir the heart of God that I am sung over and delighted in that I am beautiful in his eyes and that I am set apart for a sacred purpose. You can tell me these things and yes you should. But I beg you don't tell me who I am until you have caused me to gaze in awe at 'I Am', come on Jen.

It means you can be in the room with God and it still be all about you. That's what it means. But the awe of Christ, it breeds something called self forgetfulness. It's this idea that we sort of forget

ourselves in the presence of God. It's you know this idea, isn't self deprecating or self hating. It's not like, oh, woe is me. Good as God. Actually it's a little different. Here's my definite self forgetfulness comes when we are. So in awe of who God is that we think of ourselves less, his presence overwhelms us and we lose our sense of self. You might say, you know what? That's a little farfetched and that's kind of hard to understand. And you might ask the question, what is it about the awe of Jesus that could possibly get me to think of myself less. I need to understand my story.

I need to go to counseling. I gotta go to my life coach. I need to get confidence and you know, hear me. You might need to do all of those things. You might actually need to do those, okay? Hear me. But you can still do those and keep God as the most important, powerful thing in your life and not your own evolution. Weirdly enough, secular psychologists are beginning to understand awe and its human effects on physiologies. And I'll tell you when I went down the rabbit hole of awe and I saw how secular the word secular means people that sort of come from outside the faith, okay? This is aren't Christian psychologists. These are people from the outside world, right? When I hear how they understand awe, oh my goodness. It changes how you see God. It really does. Now research in this phenomenon has proven that awe experiences do a few things.

Listen to this. They make us feel more connected to others. When you're in awe, you feel more connected to others. Awe reduces your stress. These are secular psychologists, okay? And these. These are people far smarter than I am. Right? They cut it actually, uh, all moments cut production of inflammation in the body by reducing cytokines inflammation. By the way, is the marker of every major modern Western disease, all moments cause people to behave more ethically and generously in the few weeks after and awe activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which reduces our fight or flight response. That's quite a bit that an experience does to you, right? I mean, I feel like we all are looking for that in a pill right now. And yet there it is right in something called awe when we sort of towards self-help activities and meetings and we do those things and we go to counseling.

And when we, when we pursue our, our deepest self and we long for these blogs that are teaching us how to be a better person and we get our morning gratitude, journal, all these things, all great things. When we do those things, we're actually weirdly enough working to sort of blunt the things I just described. We're trying to get rid of anxiety. We're trying to get rid of stress. We're trying to get rid of depression. We're trying to get rid of inflammation. We're trying to change our lives. When we self, when you self have activities and meetings in them, we're actually trying to manufacture the very things that all induces naturally.

Additionally, Emma Stone, PhD, not the actress. Okay? She says this experience, the experiences that arouse awe can help us to re-conceptualize our sense of self in our, our role in society. And from a more cosmic perspective, our place in the universe. It's almost as if we were created for awe. There's a problem though. Okay. Cause we want the awe, but Jesus is the one that has it. He's the one that doles it out. Here's my last point. We can only follow Jesus if we are truly in awe of him. Now, a lot of us and myself included, have gone through seasons where I have tried to follow Jesus when I am not in awe of Him. Now that's not saying you agree with everything. He says all the time. That's not saying you can't be in sorrow or grieve or be in doubt. It's not what I'm saying.

That's not what I'm saying at all. You can experience those things and still pursue the awe of Jesus. Okay? Jesus says the natural, next thing you must do to be in awe of me, continue to be awe of me is to serve me and to follow me. It's not enough to just be momentarily inspired by Jesus at a conference. It's not enough. He reminds his disciples of that in this next passage. And it's crazy. And you may be wondering maybe in your own life, why you haven't followed or serve Jesus the way you wanted to or why maybe your faith walk hasn't gone the way you've hopefully been trying to expect. Look what Jesus says in verse 26. If anyone serves me, he must follow me. You've experienced awe in me. Okay, great. Whoever serves me must follow me and where I am, there will be my servant.

Be also, you wanna be with me? Oh, that's how you do it. If anyone serves me, me, the father, God, the father will honor him. Friends following Jesus will be absolutely costly. There is no to doubt about it. And we've kind of unpacked. Even just the challenges we face in my two sort of lists there. I mean, that's a hard challenge, right? To overcome, to make sure we're following Jesus the right way. Let alone literally following him, making disciples of many nations, praying over the sick and the widow, doing those things. It's difficult, right? Jesus wants us to know it is very costly to follow him. Now, if you wanna know how costly it is, just look where he's gone. Look where he is going. It says he's going to die. Jesus is a grain that will go into the dirt that will die. You wanna follow him? Are you willing to follow Jesus to his death with your spirit?

Hmm. Now Jesus is talking to his disciples here and listen. They weren't really ready to follow him fully yet. If you know the story, they actually desert him just a few days later. They are all in with him when he is got the donkey. But the moment he takes an L he gets arrested and now he's jailed. They're gone. Even Peter audibly denies him three times. That's a lot of evidence. So these same disciples though, they were eventually willing to die for him. You know, some of the history, some of disciples died, gruesome deaths proclaiming the good news of Jesus. How did that happen? Acts chapter two verses one, two and four. Read this. This is after Jesus has resurrected and has gone off. There are all those disciples are sitting around. It says when the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

And suddenly there came from heaven, a sound like a mighty rushing wind. And it filled the entire house where they were sitting and they were all filled with a holy spirit. The spirit came, the holy spirit came and it empowered 'em and the Spirit's action did something in them. What did it, what did it do? Do you remember? The spirit created something in them. Verse 43 of chapter two in Acts it says, and awe came upon upon every soul. Many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. What happened to these disciples? Jesus acted. The awe of Jesus fell over them and they were in awe as response of him back, they were in awe. That's what happens. Listen, in order to follow Jesus, we must put ourselves in position to encounter him in a way that moves us toward awe of them. We have to put ourselves in that position.

Hear me, the Greeks and the Gentiles would never have been in awe of Jesus. If they were not in Jerusalem. When Jesus showed up on the donkey, they happen to be in the presence of God and boom. So how do we put ourselves in the presence of God? I want that. I'm gonna give you some practical ideas that you have already heard. Listen, first thing you can do to be in moments. Find, leave yourself open to awe moments from God. Read the scripture, read the scripture. Woman told me today, just out there I shared the story about myself, opening the book of John. I dunno if you, you heard that. I shared, I, I read the book of John and met Jesus lady at Doxa. She tells me my son, my son said, he's gonna go bring his Bible to school during his reading time.

So he can now read the book of John because he wants to encounter Jesus too. You wanna encounter Jesus. Be like him. Open up the scripture. Faith comes from hearing the word of God. This is God's word to us. Put yourself in position. Next thing, enter prayer with God, man. I am not shaming you to pray. I am absolutely not. But man, I tell you what. Prayer is communication with God, to and from meditation and prayer, be in the presence of God, through prayer, with others as well. And that goes to the next one. You want to be open yourself up to moments of awe be in community with other people. You, it is increasingly difficult to be in awe of God. It's not impossible of course, but it's in, it's difficult. Think about it. Many of the, awe moments you experience today actually happen in group settings, concerts, church conferences, living room parties. These are moments of awe that stir us up.

Why not be together with your brothers and sisters? You can join a Missional Community. You can join a DNA group at Doxa be in the presence of other people that are also waiting on God to, to bestow them with this tsunami. So we can be so we can respond with awe and what else can we do. You can learn the truth of what Jesus did for you. Some of you don't know the truth of what Jesus did for you. What did he actually do? See those Gentiles. They, um, those Greeks, remember they saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem and they said this like profound passage. They said, sir, we, we wanna see Jesus. They saw him on the donkey and they go, oh, we've gotta see him. I gotta see this man. But how would they ever see Jesus as the king? He truly was only, only in his death for their sins.

And that's it. Jesus died for you. Jesus rose for you. Jesus did that for you. You now can be counted as righteous before a holy God because Jesus grants you, his identity. You get to wear his righteousness. He takes your sin from you and you get to go in heaven in the presence and power of God because of the work that he did, shedding his blood. Once we encounter Jesus, we are awed. And then we're free to see him and worship him and follow him wherever that may take us. And guess what? Wherever he goes, I want to be because where, where I, wherever he is, I'm gonna be in awe with him and man, I'm not worried about much else after that. Let's pray father. I pray for awe as we we're gonna respond through communion. As we respond through giving, as we respond through song, Lord Jesus.

I pray that you are present with us, that you would grant us moments of awe Lord Jesus that we see you for who you truly are. There are people in this room right now that have a crucial decision to make that they are on the brink of deciding whether or not they should come back to a church building or be a part of a church family. And I Lord Jesus. I am, I am just praying right now in this moment that you speak to them and let them understand that you do not go to church. You become part of the church and you embrace that identity and follow you and set, set themselves up. Lord God for a, a moment of awe with you in the presence of his people. So Lord Jesus, speak to that person that I felt that for. And Lord God for all the rest of us, Lord God would our hearts and minds be open to you as we respond. We love you. You are truly an awesome God in his name. Amen.