

What did Jesus do? Part 1 - Incarnation

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[0 : 00] So we get to continue on in our series, which is Foundations. We're exploring what Christians believe, kind of looking at the essential truths of our faith. And we're basing it on the Apostles' Creed.

And the Apostles' Creed doesn't have everything there is to know about Christianity, but man, it is a great start. It is a solid foundation. And really what it gives us, it gives us those closed-handed truths of what we believe, those things that are very essential to the gospel.

And what I love about the Apostles' Creed is also that it reminds us that Christianity is old school, right? It's not like we showed up today and Christianity was invented 50 years ago or even 100 years ago.

Man, this creed goes back thousands of years. These beliefs have been believed by Christians for thousands of years. And so when we recite the Apostles' Creed and when we say the Apostles' Creed, we're joining with a historical tradition spanning back 2,000 years and joining with other Christians who have said and agreed and believed this same creed, which is an amazing thing to think about.

But also when we say this creed, we realize that it's still said in thousands upon thousands upon thousands of churches all around the globe even today. And so as we say it, we're joining in the unity of the faith with them and what we believe.

[1 : 20] And so that is something that is just amazing what I love about this creed. And so why don't we stand together as we say it? We're going to have it on the slide behind me. I'll start us out and then you guys can follow my cadence if you don't mind.

All right. We up? Good. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead. On the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen. You guys can be seated. Thank you. Those of you who were thinking, the Holy Catholic Church, is that like the Annunciation down the road? Is that what we're referring to? Are we in the wrong church?

[2 : 33] That is not what that means. Catholic just simply means the universal body of believers. It's not referring to a type of denomination that's better than another denomination. That's not what it's getting at.

It's like, hey, it's the Holy Catholic Church is the believers of all time who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, and that's what that is referring to. So I just want to, by way of reminder, when we first started out this series, I said, you know, these statements of this creed, they're entry points into the gospel, right?

They're the starting point. They're not the end point. And to be honest, as we look into these things, they're actually, if you choose to pursue it even further, each of these statements of truth, you will find that you're on a journey into infinity.

What's the amazing thing about God is we're going to spend eternity with him and still not have him figured out. That's how wonderful and glorious and majestic and infinite and eternal he is.

And so whether you're here exploring Christianity or you've been a Christian for a long time, what I'm excited about with this series and my hope is that this knowledge of God moves from our head into our hearts, where it really transforms and changes us.

[3 : 39] And what we begin to realize as we grab a hold of truth, we begin to realize that actually truth has grabbed a hold of us instead. And that's the amazing thing about this. That's what we're excited about. And so we've already talked and looked at who God is, God the Father.

And today we get to focus on the part of the creed that has to do with Jesus and his life. And it says this, I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.

Now, next week we're going to focus on Jesus's death and what it accomplished. But today we're going to focus on Jesus's life. And, you know, in our cultural moment today, a lot of attention is given with regards to Jesus to the cradle and the cross.

You know, we celebrate Christmas. We remember that. It's a big holiday moment. And then we also celebrate, you know, Good Friday and Easter. That's a big moment in our calendar. And we make a big deal about those things.

And, you know, you can consider yourself a believer and a follower of Jesus. And, you know, most likely probably give a lot more thought and attention to those things than to the life of Jesus. And even if you wouldn't call yourself a believer, you probably are very familiar with Christmas and with Easter because of our culture that we live in today.

[4 : 52] Those are big moments. And I'm not downplaying those things at all. Actually, man, those things are pivotal. They're huge. And they're essential to our faith because the cross reminds us that Jesus came to die for us.

But then Jesus's life, what it does, it reminds us that God came to live with us. God came down to be with us, which is an amazing thing. Jesus came to live with us. And he did that by putting on flesh.

John 1.14 said this, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He became a man just like us. And we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So why is this a big deal? Some of you may be thinking like, yeah, so what? God coming down, I mean, probably wasn't hard for him. What is it with that? Who cares? But it is a big deal.

God coming close to us, God being with us, God walking amongst us like Jesus did is massive in the way that he drew so close. And because the reality is, like, he didn't come down for a brief moment.

[5 : 54] He didn't, sorry, he didn't come down and was just like, you know what? I'm going to be here for a few days. I'm going to die on the cross and rise from the dead and go back to heaven. He didn't do that. He wanted to be with us.

He came to be just like one of us in every way. He came to experience our humanity for himself. And if we think about it, actually, when we think about what love is, this is what the nature of love is.

It's very much like this. Every type of loving relationship that we can think of actually proves this, is that we want to be close to the ones we love, right? When I started to fall in love with Haley, I didn't pursue her by never seeing her and never calling her.

I wanted to spend time with her as much as I can, and I still do. And we want to be with our families, right, if we love them. We want to be with good friends that we love. We want to experience what they experience.

And we can't help but hurt when they hurt. And we want to rejoice when they're rejoicing. It's very normal. And whatever their circumstance of life may be, what we want to do if we really, when we love people, we look at their circumstance.

[7 : 01] And we don't want to stand back and say, like, oh, man, that's a bummer for them. No, we want to move towards them. We want to enter into their circumstance. We want to sit in it with them, whether that's pain or whether that's joy.

And if there's any barriers that stand in the way of that, man, we do whatever we can to get those barriers out of the way. And this is what is amazing about Jesus coming. Jesus coming down and putting on flesh and being like us in every single way.

Because we have to remember, Jesus is God. He is God himself. And there has always been a legitimate barrier between us and God. And this barrier is called sin.

And even though we can say, yeah, but, you know, how is this barrier a reality? I mean, isn't God everywhere? You know, isn't he, isn't, how can there be distance between us? But it isn't a distance of a spatial distance.

It's actually a relational distance that exists. There's this kind of remoteness relationally between us and God because of sin. And this remoteness exists because God put barriers in place between himself and people, which is one of the big storylines of the Bible.

[8 : 10] It's this, we can't come close to God because of our sin. We have this children's book that we like to read to our kids. It's called The Garden, The Curtain, and The Cross, which sums up this storyline really well.

And I just want to commend that to you as parents or grandparents. Well, this book, it's an easy read. It's fun for kids. But it tells this amazing storyline. And it gives our kids the gospel in the most accessible way.

But it basically is this. Man, God creates this perfect world. And he creates this garden. And he puts Adam and Eve, our parents, into it. And he's there with them.

And he blesses them. And he gives them everything they need. And he's also there with them. His presence is there in the garden with them. And they're enjoying God. He's close.

But then a lot of us know the story. Adam and Eve, they sinned. They disobeyed God. And the result of that is they got kicked out of the garden. They got kicked out. And God put two huge angels with flaming swords, which was basically like, you're kicked out.

[9 : 11] And guess what? You can't come in. And the storyline of the Bible is this continuation of that reality that God, he always wanted to draw close to his people because he loved them. But because of sin, there had to be this barrier.

And so we see when he chooses Israel as his people. And he says, I'm going to be your God and you're going to be my people. And he designs this tabernacle where his presence is going to dwell. And then later on, it becomes the temple where his presence dwells.

But in that temple, anyone could go into to a certain point. And then there was this one place called the Holy of Holies where God's manifest presence was. And there was a curtain.

There was a barrier between men and God. And you know what was on that curtain? Two angels with swords. And no man was allowed to enter in because if you entered in, you were going to die.

Because God's presence is so holy. And if you come in as a sinful person, that God will judge you for your sin. And the judgment of sin is death. And so there's this constant theme throughout the Bible that God is saying, man, I would love to be with you.

[10 : 13] I want to be with my people. But because of your sin, you can't come in. And that is this huge thing. It's this beautiful thing. And so when we think about it, Jesus coming isn't this throwaway moment of like, man, God, cool.

That's so nice that you came down. No, it should make us stop and say, oh, my goodness. This is an amazing thing that Jesus stepped down from heaven and come and put on flesh and be amongst us and walk amongst us.

A holy God. Man, God, you do love us so much. You do love us so much that you didn't want to stay away. You entered into our experience and became like us.

And because we couldn't overcome our sin and become holy to be able to be in God's presence, God realized we couldn't become like him. So he came to be like us. And it's easy to miss how profound that is.

Jesus put aside ultimate power and privilege in heaven. And he robed himself in our humanity and our frailty and our suffering. And he experienced the fullness of human life.

[11 : 22] Think about it. He felt the emotional toil we feel when we lose loved ones. He lost loved ones. Being hurt with people's words, slander and betrayal. Being mocked.

He was beaten. He was left by friends, abandoned by his closest friends. He was hated deeply by his enemies and his own people. He lived for 30 years as a carpenter.

Hard work in a desert climate. He would go out and work hours on end in the desert sun, sweating and sunburned. And he would know what it was like to come home from an exhausting day of work and feel depleted in his body.

He knew what it was like to be hungry. God came in a way that we could understand and relate to. Jesus, he didn't come with feathered wings in his back.

He didn't have a face that glowed. He didn't stand 10 feet taller than everyone else. Actually, the Bible says that he was kind of meh looking. He was just an ordinary dude. Which means that Jesus didn't look like Zoolander in an Arab tunic, right?

[12 : 32] He wasn't walking around casting blue steel at everybody. He was just a regular guy. Which means we would have passed him on the street. We would have walked by Jesus. Jesus was here today.

We would have walked by him on the street and not thought twice about him. Because of his external appearance. Wasn't anything that would be desirous to a man or woman and say like, Oh, wow, something's super special or different about this guy.

And he didn't come with any economic advantage, right? He didn't say like, you know what? I'm going to choose to be born to a king, a super powerful person with a lot of sway. To kind of, you know, leverage that opportunity of coming.

He wasn't born to wealth and power. He was actually born to a very poor family. And so when we look at Jesus' life and how he came, we see that man, God refused every possible convenience and comfort he could to take on the form of man and come live with us.

Which is an amazing thing. The all-powerful God who created the universe. He robed himself in our weakness. And this is one of the ways we measure love. We look and we see, man, how much does it cost that person to love?

[13 : 41] And the more it costs them, the more we say, man, that guy has a deep love for that other. Jesus gave up heaven to be with us. The king of the universe became a humble peasant.

He left heaven's perfect peace and joy and came into our world's sadness and suffering. That's how much he loves to be with us. And we need to know this.

Because if all we understand about Jesus is the cradle and the cross, we miss this massive point. We miss this massive reality. Jesus doesn't just know us because he's an all-knowing God.

He knows us because he also experienced everything we experienced. He didn't run for the hills when he got up close and personal. I mean, think about it.

It's easy to love people from a distance. It's easy to say we love people from a distance. But it's very different to love people when their issues are up close and in our face. And they actually affect us.

[14 : 38] I mean, it's one thing for me to say I love the poor and the orphan. And it's a very different thing for me to actually move towards them and to get into their life and into their situation. And to sit with them and to care about them.

And to want to feel their pain and know their pain and understand their pain. But that's exactly what love does. And Jesus coming to live with us shows us this amazing act of love.

As much as his death shows us his love for us, so does his life. And it would do us well to give Jesus' life equal attention as we do to the cradle and the cross.

Because Jesus' life reminds us what love does, right? Love moves towards others. It initiates. It doesn't wait. But it also, Jesus' life also changes the game for how to live.

Jesus came to show us how to live. One Harbor Church, we are, man, really working hard to push back darkness in the area of addictions in our region.

[15 : 36] And we've grown with this understanding. Have we tried and moved towards people that are afflicted by addiction? We've gained some understanding. We've gained some compassion as we come to know them and become in relationship with some of these people.

And we have a lot more to learn. I'm not saying that we got it all figured out. But we're trying. And the fascinating thing is some of the stuff we learn from sitting with these guys and gals is that the best rehab programs that are out there require this prolonged stay.

Oftentimes more than a year. They'll get away and they'll go somewhere hundreds of miles away and be in a rehab program far from everyone. No contact with the life they came out of. And the reason why they do that, the reason why they do it so long is they actually spend a lot of time retraining them how to live.

Not just detoxing them and getting them off of the substance that they're addicted to. It's that they're retraining them how to live. Because somewhere along the journey with addicts is that they've lost how to live a regular normal life.

And this is where, man, I've been so humbled. And I've realized that, you know what, I'm not different to these guys at all. Because without Jesus, none of us know how we're supposed to live.

[16 : 49] That's the reality. And that humbles me to the core. And now I can sit with my friends that are addicted to substances and say like, hey, I may not know exactly what it's like to be in your shoes.

But in a sense, I actually really do because I have no idea what it is to live right. The Bible says we've all gone astray. We're all lost sheep. But Jesus came to restore that, what it looks like to live.

So how are we supposed to live then? We're reminded that God created us to love him and love others. And that's what Jesus shows us. That's what Jesus did.

But the reality is we don't do that. Because of sin, similar along the way, we kind of chuck that out. We're not putting God first and putting others first.

And we become addicts to ourselves. We care about ourselves way more than we care about other people or God. And we put everything before others and everything before God himself.

[17 : 49] But Jesus came. He came to kind of push the reset button and to show us how to live. And so while we may have a lot of opinions of what it means to love God and others, Jesus gives this like perfect example, this model that we can look to and say, actually, that's what it looks like.

When we look at his life, we see what it means. Here's a cool little snapshot. These two verses are a cool little snapshot of Jesus' life of ministry. In Luke 5, 15 to 16, it says this.

But now, even more, the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

This passage is this beautiful example of Jesus' life, Jesus' ministry. Man, at first we see him loving people, right? Man, crowds would follow him. Crowds would gather.

And he didn't ignore them. He wasn't like trying to run away from them. No, he would oftentimes, what's amazing about Jesus, he would push pause on his agenda. He would push pause on what he was going to do or where he was going.

[18 : 50] And he would stop and he would minister to people and meet their need and move toward them. That's what he so often did time and time again. He never seemed to be so rushed that he didn't have time to love and minister to others.

So how did he love and minister to them? Well, he did it by giving them grace and giving them truth. The crowds would come and he would give them the grace and the power of the kingdom.

And he would heal their bodies. People would come and they would bring those who were sick and had oppressed, he would cast out demons that were oppressing people. He would even forgive people's sins. But he just didn't do those things.

He also gave them truth as well. In addition, he knew that they needed to know the truth because the truth sets us free. They needed to be set free from this understanding of trying to earn righteousness to please God.

And so he came to proclaim the gospel, the gospel of truth, that he was the only way to the Father and to eternal life. And these two things made him quite popular with the crowds.

[19 : 53] And, of course, we know with some people it made him quite unpopular as well. But what we see is Jesus always surrounded by crowds of people. People love to be with him. But the amazing thing about Jesus, he didn't get caught up in the hype of the crowd.

Right? He didn't let his identity be shaped by what he did or what people were saying about him or the effective ministry that he had. It's interesting.

There's three essential lies that we all believe that shapes this false identity about ourselves. And it's this. I am what I do. I am what I have.

Or I am what other people think or say about me. We fall into that trap all the time. But Jesus didn't. And why did he do that? Man, because he had this amazing relationship with God.

He loved God so much. He was so rooted in his identity with God. He wasn't desperate for the crowds. And he wasn't desperate for their attention. He wasn't desperate that, man, look what the crowds mean for me.

[20 : 59] Man, it puts my ministry on a pedestal. It puts me in the spotlight. And he didn't care what they said about him. There was times where they said, oh, we want to make you king. You're so amazing.

And it said he didn't entrust himself to them because he knew what was in man's heart. So we see Jesus, oftentimes, he would be with the crowds and then he would withdraw from the crowds.

But where was he going? He would often say he would get away to a quiet and desolate place. He would go up a mountain to pray with God. And he did that because he loved God, not because he hated people.

Jesus wanted to be with his father as well. He knew he needed time with his heavenly father. And not only needed it, he wanted to be with him. That's why Jesus always stole away to pray.

What I love about this is actually this verse sums up the totality of how the rhythms of Jesus' life. It's really not more complicated than that. And we should pay attention to this because, again, we're disciples of Jesus.

[21 : 57] We want to look at his life and we want to say, man, I want to imitate him. I want to follow how he did things because he's the perfect example. And that's all he did. Jesus loved people and he loved God.

He moved between being with people and loving them to getting away and being with God and loving God. And this is important for us to grasp. Some of us, man, we need to realize we're spending all of our time with God and not spending any time with people.

And we need to balance that out. We need to recheck and swing that back into balance where actually we're, yeah, that's awesome. I love that you're spending time with God and learning about him and loving him and enjoying your relationship with him.

But, man, some of us need to get out and actually be with people. We need to move towards our neighbors and our friends and our family and our coworkers and love and try to minister to them, try to create some relationships so we could love them in order that we can introduce them to this amazing Jesus that we so love.

Right? And some of us, man, we're so relationally minded and wired that, man, we love being with people. And I love that about you guys, right, that are out there that are like super extroverts and love to do that.

[23 : 04] But then there's a sense that, man, you need to bring that back into balance. And yet sometimes you need to pull away. You need to spend some time with Jesus by yourself alone in solitude. And that's not easy to do for people that love to be with others.

But both are super important and both are this tension that we need to hold on to that is so good for us. And one of the things that, man, if you're here and you're just like, gosh, man, I don't know how to do that.

You know, one way, if you're not involved in a community group, if you need to be spending more time with people, man, get into community group. That's what's so awesome. That's a place that we get to love one another and spend time with one another and care for one another and serve one another and minister to one another.

Right? And then for some of us that need to pull away and just, I don't know how to start spending time with God and praying. We have this community Bible reading thing that makes it so easy and so accessible. And you can just, you know, hit me up or one of the pastors up or one of the leaders up about that and just be like, how do I start this thing?

I just need some help and we'll help you do that. And it's an opportunity to go and listen to God through his word and then respond in prayer. And then you get to tell someone about kind of what the big thing that God shared with you in the morning.

[24 : 15] So Jesus' life, getting back to Jesus, Jesus' life, it shows us the way that we're meant to live in this world. What it looks like to be a disciple of Jesus, a model of Jesus. Remember the first generation of disciples, we look at the book of Acts.

And you know what they were called? They were called followers of the way, right? That's what they considered them because they were saying like, man, these guys, the way they live, the way they act, is so very different to this path that the rest of us are going on.

There's this other way that they seem to be walking in that is totally different, right? They were called little Christians in Antioch. That word Christian literally means little Christs.

We're like these reflections of who Jesus is. And what they were seeing is the way that the disciples of Jesus were living in the early church is that people say like, man, that person, the way they act, the way they live and what they do, I can make a direct line to say, that person's been with Jesus.

That's an amazing thing. I mean, these guys were charitable. They were kind. They were generous. They loved one another. They were together all the time. They prayed all the time. They were devoted to learning about the gospel.

[25 : 26] They had a distinct way of life that stood out from the rest. And while I'm encouraging us towards this, what I'm not saying is that this is easy. Actually, I'm going to be honest with you.

It's downright hard. It's very, very difficult to live this way. Living like Jesus isn't an easy thing to do. And here's the thing, guys. Because it's not easy, it can do one of two things.

It could either lead us into pride where we're like, man, we're going to try so hard and we're going to live like Jesus. And I'm going to be just like him in every single way. I've got this. No problem. Or we begin to build pride in ourselves.

We're like, man, look what I can do. Or we fall into despair where we try to live like Jesus and we fail and we're just like, oh, I've done it again.

I've failed. I'm just going to give up. This is impossible. And so there's this temptation to fall between those two things, right? And the reason we're prone to this is because we forget the gospel.

[26 : 25] Yes, Jesus came to show us how to live. And yes, we should strive to live like him and be like him and show him to the world.

But here's the thing. Our relationship with God is not based on that. Our relationship, your relationship with God is not based on your ability to mirror Jesus perfectly.

Because here's the thing, guys. We're never going to equal Jesus' life. We're never going to pull that off. And that was actually the reason for his life and ministry here on earth.

Jesus not only shows up and shows us how to live, he actually lived the life we couldn't live. Jesus came to live for us. It wasn't enough for Jesus just to come and die for our sins.

I mean, the cross, we look at the cross and what it does, it takes away our sins. On the cross, our sins were put on Jesus. And the cross is Jesus taking the punishment for our sins so that now there's no more condemnation because he took all our condemnation upon himself and all our guilt.

[27 : 35] And now it's no more. We're like, yes, we're free of sin. But here's the problem. In isolation, just looking at the cross, that doesn't deal with our issue of righteousness.

Jesus taking away our sins and being punished for our sins does not make us righteous. Really what it means is that we're morally neutral. Here's the problem. We still, in some way, have to become righteous somehow to be able to receive eternal life with God and to be able to stand in his presence.

Righteousness. And righteousness is a status that can only be earned through proven obedience, through a time of obedience to something, right? You know, we don't go to our babies and say, man, you are so righteous.

You know? When my boys were born, they didn't pop out and say, that is a righteous child. Look at that, how righteous he is. I can just tell. Why don't we do that? Because they haven't done anything to prove that they're righteous at all.

But we often look at people who are upright and sacrificial and compassionate. Mother Teresa is always the first person that springs into my mind. And we don't have a problem with looking at those type of people, missionaries that are sacrificing their lives and saying, man, that is a righteous person.

[28 : 54] Because what we're doing is, and we do that all the time, what we're doing is we're looking around and we're assessing people's lives. We're assessing their works. Man, are they good? Are they bad? And what does it sum up to?

Are they righteous or not? But here's the thing. If we're honest with ourselves, we'll kind of admit, like, our assessment of righteousness to other people is a very arbitrary standard.

It really doesn't mean anything. It's kind of like tuning a piano with another piano, which anybody would say that's a really bad idea. As you know, that piano that you're using for tuning isn't out of tune, right?

And that's the problem with us trying to assess righteousness. Because we aren't righteous. We're actually out of tune pianos. We're out of tune with righteousness. We're so unrighteous, we don't know how unrighteous our righteousness is.

But when it comes to God's righteousness, God's law is like a tuning fork.

[29 : 54] It's always in tune. It's always the standard that we're meant to be set to. And compared to God's perfect law, when we do that, we look at our lives, we actually find out how out of tune we are.

Romans 3, 19 to 20 says this, Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. So when we compare ourselves to the gospel, what we find out is like, oh man, I don't measure up.

That really stinks. But here's the good news of the gospel, guys. We're going to have to stay there. Where we failed, where we failed to meet God's perfect righteousness, Jesus succeeded.

This is the huge message of the gospel. He lived a perfect life of obedience to God. He says about himself, he came to fulfill the law, Matthew 5, 17.

[30 : 54] He says, I didn't come to abolish the law. I actually came to fulfill it. I came to meet all its requirements. I came to obey it perfectly. And that's what he did. And by doing that, he earned the righteousness of God that comes through obeying God's perfect law.

And this is what sets you and I free from falling into pride and despair when we think about, man, I need to live like Jesus as Christians. The gospel says, actually, we don't have to match Jesus' life to be in relationship with God.

Rather, we're made righteous through faith in Jesus because of what Jesus has done. Romans 5, 19 says this, For as through one man, he's talking about Adam, as through his disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one, talking about Jesus, the many will be made righteous.

There is no way that we can live the life Jesus lived. Just assign yourself to that, saying, okay, all right.

Kind of led off the hook there. So God sent his son to live that life for us. And when we recite the creed saying, I believe in Jesus Christ, this is a big part of what we're saying.

[32 : 16] I believe in Jesus Christ, who came to live the life I couldn't live, who came to show me how to live, who came to be with me. Jesus is my righteousness.

Jesus is your righteousness. And we don't have to earn that righteousness through works. We attain it through faith in Jesus Christ. It says when we have faith in him, we receive.

His righteousness is credited to us. It says because of faith, we're united with Christ. We are robed in his righteousness. We are hidden in Christ. And so when God looks at you and I, he doesn't see unrighteous sinners who aren't able to meet the satisfaction and the requirements of the law.

What God sees is he sees us surrounded in Jesus' righteousness. That's the good news of the gospel. And that's what it is. And that doesn't give us license to not try to live like Jesus.

And it doesn't give us a boast to say, ooh, I did it myself. Actually, what it reminds us of is Jesus earned the righteousness we couldn't earn. And he did it for us. He lived the life we couldn't live.

[33 : 24] And he also works that life out in us. Because of faith in him, because he has saved us, he then sends his spirit into us who abides in us and dwells in us. And he's the one that works out the righteousness of Christ, that he set apart good works for all of us to do.

But we don't boast in ourselves being able to do those good works. It's actually God working through us. So from start to finish, we see that Jesus did it for us and that Jesus does it in us.

And that's the amazing thing about the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's the amazing thing of Jesus coming and living for us. If you're here and you're not a Christian, perhaps you like the idea of Jesus being a really good moral example.

Kind of looked at him and said, man, I want to know more about this Jesus because he seemed like a really nice guy. He did a lot of really good things. And man, I love that he set this amazing example for us to follow.

But I hope today you realize that that's not enough, that you need more than that. Actually, you need Jesus's record of obedience for you because without it, eternal life is at stake.

[34 : 35] There is no way that you're going to live a righteous enough life to earn your way into heaven. We're all going to stand before God one day.

And I don't know if this is going to happen, but I always like to think about this, that, you know, God says, why should I let you into heaven? And for many of us, we're going to be tempted to pull out our resume and say, oh, you know, I did this and this and this.

Look at all these great things I did. And then we're going to have the law that says, yeah, but you didn't do this, this, this, this, and this, and this, and this. And for those of us who believe in Jesus and are Christians, what we do is we stand before God at that judgment seat and he says, why should I let you into heaven?

And we say, you probably shouldn't. But I believed in him and his righteousness is counted towards me and he has changed me.

He transformed me and that's why I get to be in heaven. And if you're here today and you're not a Christian, that's the message of the gospel. That's the good news of the gospel. You don't have to strive. You don't have to try. You don't have to work your way into heaven.

[35 : 42] You get to rest in the perfect work of Jesus Christ. And you attain that not through trying to earn it, you attain it through faith in him. And today you can be saved by simply saying a simple prayer, Jesus, man, I'm going to give up trying to earn my righteousness.

I'm going to give up my life to say, I'm going to turn away and I want to live for you. I need your righteousness considered towards me. Come and save me and he will save you.

And you could do that right now. You could do it during the song we're singing. You could do it before communion and then come and take communion in the most amazing way for the first time. For those of us who are here who are Christians, and maybe you're battling in that pride and despair thing, we need to repent of both of those things and realize actually what it comes down to is whether you're proud and self-righteous and think you got this without God or you fall into despair and think, man, I just can't do this.

I got to give up. Man, both of us, both sides of those things, we're not resting in the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf. And we need to repent of those things and turn to him and enjoy following him in a way that's way more restful and way more enjoyable.

Let's also remember that Jesus came to be with us and God came down from heaven. He loves to be with his people.

[37 : 07] And the incarnation that Jesus is putting on flesh reminds us that that's the core of God's heart. He doesn't want to be distant from you. And if you're here today and you've just felt like there's a distance between you and God, man, press into that truth.

Press into that promise. And for all of us, man, let's be intentional about loving God and loving others. Let's follow the way of Jesus.

Let me pray. So Jesus, we've looked at your life today and it is an amazing life. Man, you did what no other person who ever lived on earth did.

You obeyed God. You loved him perfectly. And you loved others so perfectly, so sacrificially, so wonderfully. You came and showed us the glory of God.

You were full of grace and truth. For those of us who are here that don't yet believe in you, I pray as they respond to this, Lord, as they pray to you, maybe for the first time, that it wouldn't be a prayer that's just offered up and nothing happens.

[38 : 28] Lord God, I believe that you're faithful to meet them and answer that prayer and show them and make them experience the power of grace and truth personally. They would feel you all over them.

They would feel your presence near for the first time. And they would cry out, man, God is alive. Jesus is real. I pray for those who are here who are Christians.

I pray that we would, man, we would love to live for you. Not to earn our righteousness, but because we've been set free from having to earn our righteousness because you did it for us.

And that you're working out in our hearts this thing of loving God and loving others and that we would do that so well so that this world could be changed, our cities could be transformed. For your glory and your name.

Amen.