

Jesus - Liar, Lunatic, or Lord?

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. I'd like to have my word of welcome that was already expressed by Otis. I've known Otis for about close to 10 years now, and used to go to a boot camp that he had.

On my 56th birthday, which was many moons ago, he said, for your birthday present, you can do 56 burpees. And I said, Otis, I would like to make it to 57.

If you don't mind, I would like to make it that far. And so he made us all do 56 burpees that day, which was a long day. So have a lot of love for Otis. And he's right about one thing.

You know, there are a lot of good churches around New Bern, and that you would come spend time with us is a great honor for us. And so we welcome you this morning. Hopefully after the service, if you don't know me, I would love a chance to meet you.

I cannot swear that I will remember your name. I will do my best. But it is a great honor to be here. It's always a thrill to come to New Bern. It's always, you know, a great honor to help Jesse out.

[1 : 02] He's up in D.C. this weekend. So he's doing some stuff for Advance. And so, yeah, just glad to fill in and preach this morning with you. You know, a couple weeks ago, I was in the Book of Romans during my quiet time, and I read something that really stirred my heart as a guy or as someone who preaches, you know, consistently often.

Paul says this in the letter in Romans 1. He says that his desire was to impart a spiritual gift to the church. So he said my heart's desire is that I would, you know, really just impart a spiritual gift to you.

But he also, you know, wanted to have a harvest within the body. And he says I want to have a harvest as well. I want to reap a harvest. And so, you know, and that's where my heart is this morning.

I'm not up here just to fill time. I really would desire to encourage you this morning as a pastor and as a pastor of One Harbor Church. And I do hope to reap a harvest in your presence this morning, if God wills, as I speak to you.

And I hope you sense that. I was also reading this week, you know, the idea of us speaking for God. And there was a passage in 2 Kings where a prophet goes to the king and he says, you know, all the other prophets have said you're going to go to war, you're going to win the battle, Israel's going to be great.

[2 : 23] And so this one prophet, the king says, he never says anything good to me. And so he comes up and he says, go to battle, but you're going to die. And so the king looks at his people and says, go put him in prison and feed him meager rations until I get back.

And the prophet says something very unique. He says, if I see your face again, then God didn't speak through me. And so I hope this morning that God is speaking through me.

I know the spirit of God gives me thoughts and stuff during sermons, but I do pray that you would have a sense that God is speaking through me to you this morning. Because we are in a series out of Mark. And it is a book that is based on discipleship.

In fact, the title of the series is a story of discipleship. Now Mark was not, it's written by Mark, but it's really a reflection of Peter's remembrances of what it meant to be a disciple of Jesus.

And so this is an eyewitness account of Peter's life and how being a disciple and a follower of Jesus, what it meant to do that and what he saw. And so there's a lot of these little snippets and pictures and stories that are there for us to understand who Jesus is.

[3 : 37] And it also shows us what it means to follow Christ and what it means to be a follower of Christ. And so if you're here this morning and you're not yet a follower of Christ, this book explains what it is about and what it means to do that.

It's also a Christology or a Christology of Christ. And what it shows you is all the things about Jesus that probably you don't think about every day. And so it gives you a picture of who he truly was as a man and what he was.

And so that is important for us this morning. One of the things that I read early in the prep for this series was that Mark is best understood as a letter that was written.

And so it would be better understood as, you know, hearing it from front to back, the whole letter, all the chapters at one time. If I get a letter from somebody and, you know, John Coran is a good letter writer.

Sometimes he'll send me a note. I want to read the whole thing at one time. I want to read it. And that's what they say is better understood that way because the way the stories are focused, it kind of excites you and it keeps you in the moment.

[4 : 46] And you're seeing these stories and you're going, man, this is good. And so that's one way of really understanding it. But I hope this morning that we can just kind of look at our passage. And it's found in Mark chapter 3.

And our text will be verses 7 through 35. And so if you have a Bible this morning, you can open up there. If you don't have a Bible, it will be on the screen behind me. And as I read the text, it's a long text.

It has kind of a lot of moving parts. But just bear with me this morning. It's going to take a little bit of time to read it. And so beginning in chapter 3, verse 7 through verse 35, and it says this.

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed him from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan, from around Tyre and Sidon.

When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. And he told his disciples, have a boat ready for him because the crowd, lest they crush him.

[5 : 44] For he had healed so many that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, You are the Son of God.

And he strictly ordered them not to make him known. And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired. And they came to him, and he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, so that they might be with him, and he might send them out to preach and to have authority to cast out demons.

He appointed the twelve, Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, the brother of James, to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder, Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who would betray him.

Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, He is out of his mind.

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of the demons, he casts out the demons. And he called them to him and said to them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

[7 : 18] If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.

But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

Truly I say to you, all the sins will be forgiven the children of man. And whatever blasphemies they utter, But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin, for they were saying he has an unclean spirit.

One of the things I think is very evident to us this morning in our text is that Jesus is officially a sensation.

Jesus is big. I mean, he is real big. And what else could happen to someone who had the authority to touch somebody and heal them, to speak to a demon and say, be silent and leave?

[8 : 37] Nobody had ever had that kind of authority before. And if you remember some of the passages that you've been going through in this series, the people were astonished by Jesus' authority.

It was like, this is something new to us, that somebody can do these kind of things, can teach with authority, and heal and cast out demons. We've never seen this before.

And so in our day, if someone was like that, he would be big. I mean, real big. Jimmy Kimmel, every night. He wouldn't be like every other night. It'd be every night he'd be on TV with Jimmy Kimmel.

Or if he was on Facebook, or TikTok, or Twitter, or something like that. Record setting. People would be following him everywhere. Why? Because he has the authority to do things that nobody has ever seen.

And so there's great excitement because of Jesus. Jesus is bringing a great excitement to the people. However, you know, wrapped up in all this excitement, okay, is a growing opposition, not only to silence Jesus, but to get rid of him.

[9 : 40] And so you've got, the people are very excited, but there are others who are a part of the play who want him to shut up and be gone or get rid of him and just move him on.

And so they really don't understand all of this. Now this opposition is coming from two different camps. You have the Pharisees who are in Jerusalem. Now to understand a Pharisee's job, they were the learned teachers of the day.

They were sight pastors, so to speak, okay? And so they had knowledge. They had understanding. I mean, they were well taught. Paul, the Apostle Paul, who wrote most of the New Testament, was a Pharisee.

He was trained as a Pharisee. And so he was a very brilliant man. And so these guys were very, very just great leaders, but they had one issue. They loved the praise of men.

They wanted men to praise them. And they also had a desire for the Messiah that was not something that they were looking forward to here. And so, but they were very learned men.

[10 : 44] So that's one direction that it's coming from. The other direction is from his own family. It says in our text this morning that his family says he is losing his mind or he's crazy.

Now political opposition, like Pharisee against a new leader, is something that we understand in our day. Because our politics in this country are nuts.

There is no honor shown to each other anymore. It's like they are calling each other names. They're trying to one-up each other. It's all about power. And so we understand how that can kind of work just by what we see every day, even in our regional politics, our state politics, or even national politics.

That is something we kind of go, yeah, that makes sense, that they were hearing noise by Jesus, so they had to come. But to have a family member look at you and say, you are nuts, that's different.

That's hard for us to square. And I think this ties in greatly with our culture today. We are an increasingly post-Christian culture.

[11 : 51] And so this idea of who Jesus is, what Jesus is, what he does for us is really off of everybody's radar. Even in the churches, in mainline churches, Jesus is becoming less and less of a known entity.

Because people really don't want to know him and they don't really want to understand him. The result is a spiritual apathy on the outside of the church, but also on the inside of the church, which is very dangerous because you can't be neutral about who Jesus is.

You cannot be neutral. Now being neutral is sometimes seen as a good thing. You know, especially when it comes to war and stuff like that.

If you know anything about the Second World War, there were nations who said, we are not in this fight. In fact, we don't have a dog in this fight. We are neutral. We are remaining outside the fray.

And so being neutral in a sense is seen as a good thing. We're not fighting in this. We're not a part of this. We're just neutral. However, with Jesus, you are not afforded the luxury of being neutral.

[13 : 12] You are not afforded that luxury. In Matthew chapter 16, Jesus is talking to his disciples and he says this. Now when they came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do people say that the Son of Man is?

And they said, well, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. He said to them, but who do you say that I am?

And Simon Peter replied, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Do you see how it transitions from what the people are saying to making it more personal?

You see that? Jesus says, okay, I understand what they're saying, but who do you say that I am? And so Peter's confession was a very strong confession.

And so we are left with that same thing. Who do we say that the Son of Man is? You see, politically, the Pharisees' motives were this. The Pharisees thought that the Messiah was going to be someone who was going to make Israel great again.

[14 : 25] Yes, I said that. I don't mean it that way, but it's just the way it comes out. They thought that Israel was going to become great again. They were going to defeat all their enemies, and this is what the Messiah was about.

It was restoring Israel to its greater glory. The glory they have with David and Solomon and the kings. And so that's what they were looking for. And it had really nothing to do with personal holiness or repentance.

And so they didn't see the need for personal holiness, and they didn't see need for repentance. And so the Pharisees said, this is not what we're looking for. We're looking for a political leader, not someone who's going to tell us, repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.

Now the family is a little bit different, and I think you understand that. But both of them are bound by this. You know, that there's unbelief. They don't understand who Jesus is.

The family didn't understand it, and neither did the Pharisees. It's very interesting that the only ones who do know who Jesus is are the demonic influence that were prevalent in that day.

[15 : 32] It was the demons that looked at him and said, you are the son of God and would fall out in front of him. They're the only ones that really knew who he was. And Jesus would say, be quiet and don't say anything.

And that's a different discussion for a different day, but it's very interesting that the demons surely knew. And so we are not, we can't be neutral about Jesus. You have to understand some things about him.

And that's why in James, when the demons say, you are the son of God, James in 2.19 says this, you believe that God is one, you do well.

So it's a good thing if you believe that God is one. He says, even the demons believe and they shudder. The demons know who he is and they shudder about it.

In the New American Standard, it uses the word tremble. And that word tremble means that they are scared to death about who he is. So whether his parents understood who he was, whether the Pharisees understood who he was, or whether we understand who he is, Jesus makes demands of us all.

[16 : 44] He makes demands of each and every one of us in this room. Jesus demands that we profess him to be a liar, we profess him to be a lunatic, or we profess him to be Lord.

So you're very limited in what you can do. There is no neutral position with Jesus. It demands that we kind of put him in three different categories.

Is he, Jesus, just another delusional person claiming to be God? Is that what he is? Just a crazy man who says, I am God. Is that what he is?

Okay? That's one point you can take. Is he just a spectacular liar and deceiver? Could he tell some whoppers and just get you to believe what he was selling?

Is that what he is? Who was fooling people, okay, and teaching them and using trickery to get it done, all right? Is he doing that?

[17 : 44] Is that what Jesus is? Or is he truly the Son of God with supreme authority, supreme authority over Satan's realm and the ability to cast him out and to hold him captive?

Is that who Jesus is? There's those three places you can go. Those are basically your three. C.S. Lewis, speaking about this, has a great quote.

This is probably a well-known quote to most people who are followers of Jesus because C.S. Lewis wrote some great stuff. But listen to what he says about this, how we can put him in categories.

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him. I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept him to his claim to be God.

That is one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher.

[18 : 48] He would either be a lunatic on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God or else a madman or something worse.

You can shut him up for a fool. You can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher.

He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. You see, Jesus looks at you and says, I am not a good man.

I am not a good teacher. I am who I say I am. I am Lord of all. And we have to square our thoughts with that. And so if you're here this morning and you are not yet a follower of Jesus, this is kind of where you stand.

This is where you are. You are being challenged to understand who Jesus is. Now you can respond to this in a lot of different ways. A couple of them are this. Do you see this story this morning as just something very quaint and very nice?

[20 : 08] And it's a nice story. You know, Jesus was, people loved him a lot and they wanted to touch him and Jesus went down to the sea and spoke to him and he needed an escape boat to get away from him and there's so many of them and demons were all out in front of him falling down and saying, you're the son of God.

Do you just see that as being a quaint little story? And we can sometimes do that because we've never seen anything like this before. Are you incredulous to his ability to heal the sick or even to cast out demons?

I mean, do you, is that something you find hard to believe? Is it something that you are unwilling to accept? Can you accept the fact that Jesus had the authority to do such a thing?

You know, when people get sick, even if they don't follow Jesus, what do they tell you? If you're a follower of Jesus, they will say, pray for me, right? Please pray for me. I am sick.

Please pray for me. Why? Because God has the ability to heal. And so they want you to pray for them. And so is all this just something that you're unwilling to understand or even believe?

[21 : 20] You see, that is why faith is involved in all of this. Faith is a great, it involves the act of our will. It involves everything we are.

We see what faith looks like in the life of Thomas, who was one of the 12. He was one of Jesus' disciples. Now, Jesus has died on the cross.

He was buried. Three days later, he rises from the dead. He's appeared to Mary. He's appeared to those on Emmaus Road. He's appeared to some of the disciples. But Thomas had not yet seen him.

And Thomas said to the others when they said, Jesus is alive, he says, I will not believe. I will not believe unless I could put my fingers in his hands and stick my hand in his side.

I will not believe. Listen to what Jesus says to him in John 20. It says this, Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them.

[22 : 21] Although the doors were locked, Jesus came in and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here in my hands.

Put your hand in the place in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe. And Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God.

My Lord and my God. If that's you this morning, that's where you are if you're not following Jesus.

You have to understand who he is. And Thomas' confession was made because he saw the resurrected Jesus. And we're saying to you this morning, Hey, if you are not yet a follower of Jesus, this is where you start.

This is where you define him. So come to him. Trust in him. Fall at his feet. Call him Lord. Come to him. We would love a chance to talk to you this morning about this.

[23 : 23] But I must warn you about something. I really must warn you about something. That if Jesus is Lord, it changes who we are and how we live. You understand that?

It changes who we are and how we are supposed to live. You see, Jesus is not defined by what we think of him.

He is who he says he is. It's not our belief that defines him. And if this is true, that means what Jesus says about us is true.

What scripture says about us is very true. Romans 3, there is none righteous. No, not one. There is none that seeketh after God. There is none that do good.

No, not one. That's what scripture says about man. There's none of us who are righteous. And so if Jesus is who he says he is and the word of God says that's about us, that means that's true about us.

[24 : 24] Now, it can be hard for us to accept this at times because we don't like what we see or what we hear. It's like getting up in the morning and looking in the mirror and going, phew, I don't remember that guy.

Who are you? I mean, it's like looking at your reflection and saying, I don't remember being like this. And as you get older, you just say, man, I'm changing. I'm really changing a lot. And so sometimes it's hard for us to do this because God speaks to us about who we are and we go, man, I don't like the picture I'm seeing.

But Jesus does something to us. Coming to Jesus changes us. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, Paul says this, therefore, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new, the new has come. And so in Christ Jesus, the old passes away.

It's called sanctification. The old of us passes away. The new is coming. And the beauty of that verse is that Jesus has the power and the authority to change your life and mine.

[25 : 41] He has that authority to do this because He is the creator God. How else could God change us unless He has the power to create? And so He can touch us and He can say, I am changing you.

That's where the authority comes from. And so all the weaknesses that you have, and I'm talking about all of them, if you're struggling with porn, if you're struggling with being honest in your business, if you're struggling with your tongue and you can't, you're just struggling, if you're angry, if you're family, if you've been unfaithful to your wife or husband, if you're doing any of those things and about a million other things, those things can be changed by the touch of Jesus.

It can all be changed. He has the authority to do such a thing. He also has the authority to make us part of His family. Now, the church as it gathers on a Sunday morning is a family.

And that's why Elliot a minute ago said, stand up, talk to each other. We want fellowship. We want family, right? That's what we want to belong to, a family. And that's very important to us. But Jesus has the ability to make you a part of His family.

In Hebrews 2, it says this, for he who sanctifies, that is Jesus, all right, and those who are being sanctified, that is us, all have one source.

[27 : 08] That is why He, Jesus, is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, and I think you can add sisters in there too, ladies, I will tell of your name to my brothers.

In the midst of the congregation, I will sing your praise. Please let this sink into your hearts and minds this morning.

Jesus is going to sing over you. Do you understand that? That He is going to not be ashamed of you. He is going to call you a brother.

He is going to call you a sister. And He is going to sing over you. He is going to sing over you. And that is such a great and wonderful promise because sometimes as believers in Christ and followers of Jesus, we go, I am mucketed up today.

I am so full of pride. I am so full of arrogance. I am so angry. I am, just, you know, add to the list, dot, dot, dot. I mean, those kind of things at times make us look at ourselves and we say, I am just failing so much.

[28 : 17] But this is a promise to you that Jesus has made you family. There is one caveat that you have to consider though. There is a caveat. And that is, you know, you have to be obedient.

You have to walk in obedience to Jesus. You see, you know, believing in Jesus does not mean that you just live your life and do what you want to do for the rest because everything is good.

I am going to heaven so I am just going to do what I want to do. You can't live footloose and fancy free as a follower of Jesus because God, he expects some things out of us.

He expects us to be obedient. In Luke 6, 46, he's talking to those who are following at that time and he says this, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I tell you?

If you're going to call me Lord, then be obedient to what I'm saying. Okay, see, Jesus is challenging this idea that you can just live like you want just as long as you say I believe in Jesus.

[29 : 21] And so if we're going to call him Lord, if we're going to call him Christ, then it has, there's expectations that are put on us. Now living within those expectations can be hard and the church can often be very harsh on people who do not maybe live up to what they're saying.

Okay, sometimes it can be very harsh and demanding but there are expectations that are there. But what we have to struggle with is how are we going to do this?

How am I going to live a Christ-filled life in obedience? Because if you rated my obedience every day on a 1 to 10 scale, it would not be 10. I can tell you that. It won't be. And none of us in this room can say it's a 10 every day.

So how do we do this? Well, the Apostle Paul gives us an answer. He says this in 2 Corinthians 5 14 and 15. He says, for the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died.

And he died for all that those who might live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

[30 : 38] it is the love of Christ that controls us. It is the love of Christ that gives you the strength every day to stand up and say, I will follow Jesus even in all my weaknesses, even in all my strife, even in all the troubles I have.

He loves me and he gave himself for me and that is where we get our authority and power to do so. It's understanding that, that we are in him and that is what gives us the strength to do it.

And so, when you're struggling, remember these things. Say, Jesus loves me and he's gave himself for me. Remember those things.

And this will make our obedience an act of devotion and not simply a service. You see, there is a difference between service, I've got to do this, I've got to read my Bible in the morning, I've got to pray, I've got to, you know, memorize scripture, I've got to go to church every Sunday, I've got to do, I've got to do, I've got to do.

And that can be very hard on all of us. It's hard on me. All right? Understand that when you look at Jesus for who he is and his love for you, then it makes your obedience an act of love to him and it's not a service.

[31 : 59] It's not binding you down. And so, remember this. So how do we apply this to ourselves this morning? I'm running out of time. Well, if you're here this morning and you're not yet a follower of Jesus, I want you to understand this, that, you know, that your, your life does not have a lot of wiggle room in it.

All right? You do not have a lot of wiggle room when it comes to understanding who Jesus is and who he's not. You just don't have that much room. And Jesus demands a response from you.

He does demand a response. And so, are you going to call him a liar? Are you going to call him a lunatic like his family? He is nuts.

He is completely nuts. Are you going to say that? Or are you going to fall down before him today and say, you are Lord God and I give my life to you.

That's where you are this morning. You have nowhere else to go. You have nowhere else to go. My hope is, is this morning, is that you will come to Jesus in faith and just, just cry out to him and say, Lord God, save me.

[33 : 13] And we would love a chance to talk to you. Elliot, Bear, Freddie, we would all love a chance to talk to you about what it means to follow Jesus. Well, we hope you do come.

If you are a follower of Jesus, I think it's pretty evident that sometimes we come to church struggling just a little bit. You know, we come in here and people say, well, how are you doing this morning?

I'm doing just fine. I'm about ready to kill my husband, but I'm doing just fine. We do that. We, we put on, we put on masks. We do wear masks very well.

But I know that there's a chance that we could all be struggling in some ways this morning. Have the cares of this world diminished the glory of Christ? That's the question I want to ask you as a follower of Jesus.

Have the cares of today diminished what Jesus looks like to you? And have they become so important to you that you have forgotten who he is in a lot of ways?

[34 : 18] Is that, you know, because life can do that. It throws a series of issues at us and sometimes we are overwhelmed by those things. And have they taken over his glory?

Possibly it could be this. Jesus is Lord, but I'm the master of my soul. I'm going to make decisions as I see fit.

Is that you? Has his lordship been replaced by your lordship? Because that can happen very quickly. Because at times there's a rub.

I love Jesus but he demands so much from me. And it's almost like, okay, I've had enough. I'm going to do, I'm going to call my own shots. Is that you this morning? That can happen. Or maybe, maybe, you're just one of the sons of thunder.

You know that name Boagernes? He called them the sons of thunder. He didn't say that because they were nice. It's because he had bad tempers. Could that be you this morning? That you're angry and embittered and you're saying, I am going to win.

[35 : 28] Who cares what Jesus thinks? I'm winning this argument. And so, you know, is that you? Could that be you? I just want to remind you of this. Only Jesus has the authority to heal the sick.

Only Jesus can do that because Jesus is God and only God can do that. That's a God thing. And only God can heal the sick. Doctors are good.

Don't get me wrong. But they're not God. Only God can do these things. And it's according to his will at that. Only Jesus could cast out demons.

the demons that fell before him. He said, be quiet and go. Only he can do that. Only he can do something like that.

And only Jesus could face the scorn of the Pharisees. Now listen, they looked at him and said, you are a follower of Beelzebul and you cast out demons by his authority.

[36 : 33] That dishonored him greatly. In fact, in the Gospels it says that. He looks at them and they said to him, the Pharisees said, are we not right saying that you are a Samaritan and that you have demons? And he says, no, but you dishonor me and I honor my father.

It was very dishonoring for Jesus to hear that. But he stood there and he took the ridicule that was ours. And he bore it and never flinched. Your God, your Savior, your Lord is the only one that can do those three things.

And so as life gets on you this week, remember him. Remember him. Draw near to him. Confess your sin to him. Fall at his feet and let him love you.

Let him sing over you this week. Let him do that. All right? Let me pray for us. Lord God, you are such a great God. And Lord, we live in a time where people do not really care about who you are.

They neither know you nor desire to know you. I pray for this body of believers, Lord God, that they would know you as Lord and Master and that they would worship you and just, you know, with hearts of gratitude, Lord God.

[37 : 38] And I pray for those who don't know you this morning, Lord God, who say, no, I cannot believe this, that you would soften their hearts. It is a thing of grace, Lord God, that you would soften any of our hearts.

And so this morning, Lord God, I lift up this church. I lift up these people. I lift your name up and we thank you and praise you for the name of your son, Jesus. Amen. Amen.