

My Lord and My God

Building a Christian Mind

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Well, tonight we come to what I intend to be our concluding message on how to know Jesus is Lord, and you could really preach through all of the gospels, all four gospels and all the epistles to make this point, but we have to be somewhat selective and, you know, bring things to a conclusion and keep things moving. What we've seen is how much the Old Testament laid the foundation for our understanding of the Lordship of Christ. We looked at that in some detail. We saw how the prophets predicted the life and the death of Jesus Christ and his resurrection and how the Old Testament sacrificial system was a foreshadowing of the coming of Christ, the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. More recently we've looked at his deity and how that establishes the Lordship of Christ, and up until now we've seen five points related to his deity. The Bible calls Jesus God, John 1:1 and 14. Jesus does the works of God, John 5, and we looked and reviewed seven different miracles from the gospel of John that established that. You know, Jesus said, "If you don't believe my words, believe on account of the works, that God is with you, eternal God in human flesh." We saw that Jesus has the name of God. Jesus has full unity with the essence of God. Last time on Sunday we saw that Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father. He said to Philip, "If anyone has seen me, he has seen the Father." To see Christ is to see exactly what God the Father looks like.

And along those lines, if you'll just take a quick peek in the book of Hebrews 1, we're not going to go too far off track here with this, but in Hebrews 1, you see all of this kind of brought together and summarized in a wonderful way. This could have served as a closing text for tonight's message, but we'll open with it. Hebrews 1:1. Notice the emphasis on the prophets and how God spoke in times past, which has laid the foundation for everything that we've said here. We've just been biblical in all of this, beloved. Hebrews 1:1, "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world." The prophets laid the foundation. It was through Christ that God created the world. This is Lordship. He is Lord over heaven and earth.

And then in verse 3, we see that, "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." Everything that uncreated God is, is seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. A creature, if Christ was somehow the first creation of God, as Jehovah's Witnesses

blasphemously claim, then there is no way that this verse could be true, because a creature could never show forth the essence of his uncreated Creator. So for Christ to be the exact imprint of the nature of God is to say that he is uncreated God. He shares fully in the essence of God, and therefore we are right to call him God the Son.

Verse 3, going on, "he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs." You have these supernatural beings, these invisible angels, and Christ is infinitely above them. This is the mark of Lordship, this is the mark of deity. The one who rules over the universe is the one who is Lord over all, and so Jesus is eternal God in human flesh.

Now after a while, after you lay out so many of these things as we've done for the past five or six weeks, you start to realize that you're really piling on, and Scripture just adds and adds to these things so that we can't miss it. If this was, you know, if this was, sorry for the crass analogy here, if this was a street fight, those denying the deity of Christ, denying the Lordship of Christ, calling him only a good teacher or only an elevated man or something, in the face of all of this overwhelming biblical testimony about his real essence, they're bringing a squirt gun to a knife fight. This is, Scripture devastates when you understand it in its fullness, when you take time to study it and reason these things out from the word of God, you realize that there is no excuse for anyone denying the deity of Christ, and that judgment falls rightly on those who blasphemously make him out to be someone other than he is.

This just goes on and on and on throughout Scripture, so much so that in that familiar text in Philippians 2:9 through 11, all creation is going to one day make, beloved, the confession that we have been asserting and defending over the past several weeks from this pulpit. Philippians 2:9, "Therefore," speaking of Christ, "God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name," this one who is in the form of God by very nature God himself, one who is equal with God, he has a name above every name, "so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." One day there will be a unanimous affirmation and assent to the principles that we're talking about here. The people of God will join in it joyously and rejoice in the visible exaltation of our precious Lord. The enemies of God will be forced to acknowledge it by submission that is forced upon them. They will acknowledge Jesus is Lord and then they'll be sent away, but creation will unite, creation will unite in this confession. Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and so what we've been studying together over the past several weeks is simply a foretaste of the ultimate outcome of human history, and we're blessed to be able to do this together as we open the word of God. We gladly, openly make the proclamation Jesus is eternal God in human flesh. He is Lord over all. He is the perfect manifestation of the uncreated, unseen God.

Now that brings us to our sixth point in this series on his deity, and it's this, that Jesus has God's glory. Jesus has God's glory. He expresses, he manifests God's glory. He is God's glory, you could say, even more accurately. And what we see as you turn now to the

gospel of John 17, you can turn there with me in your Bible, in John 17 we see this laid out, and all of the primary points that we've been making in this recent series have come from the gospel of John, and we've bounced from there and other places of the Bible, but Jesus claimed that the glory of God was his own. This is a stunning claim, and yet he makes it so plain in the high priestly prayer found in John 17. On the verge of his crucifixion, Jesus gets alone with his Father and prays for his Father. He commits his disciples to the Father's care as he's about to go to the cross and will be temporarily separated from God as he bears the wrath of God and says, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In anticipation of that great, awful, magnificent, unprecedented hour, Jesus goes to his Father in prayer, and he says this in the opening five verses of John 17. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.'" That fifth verse is just unsearchably magnificent, and we'll get to it in just a moment.

In verse 1 there, you'll notice he says, he prays, "Father, the hour has come." What he's saying is, "The appointed hour for my death has arrived." God had appointed Christ for crucifixion. God had appointed Christ in order to be the sacrifice that would turn away his wrath for everyone who would ever believe in him. And this was a predetermined time. God determined this before the creation of the world, that this would come, and so for some 4,000 years or more, all of history had been moving from creation toward this climax, up to that point, the climax of the crucifixion of Christ. And so the hour, the appointed hour, that magnificent hour for the time of his death had arrived. Everything that Christ had been living for and looking forward to in the 33 years of his earthly, manly life, it had arrived. He came for this hour. And so as Jesus is praying here in John 17, he is anticipating the cross. He is anticipating his crucifixion, where he would absorb the wrath of God on behalf of his people. And this was a momentous occasion. The pure, spotless, innocent, undefiled Lamb of God was now going to feel the weight of sin as God imputed the guilt of sin to his Son and then struck him for the stroke that was due to his people. Jesus would suffer that penalty on our behalf. He would feel the weight of the punishment of sin as he died for you and me and everyone who would ever put their faith in him. And so this is an hour unlike any other hour that Jesus is anticipating when he says, "the hour has come." The moment has arrived. It's now time for him to step onto the stage, as it were, and go to the cross that had been appointed for him from the beginning of time.

Now notice his prayer there in verse 5 in light of that. He says, "And now, Father, glorify me," glorify me, "in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." He's looking beyond the cross to the time when he would enter into resurrected and ascended glory at the right hand of the Father. He's anticipating that, and he says, "Father, accomplish your purpose. Bring through this cross the purpose of my glorification which you had appointed." And the glorification of Christ would only be

complete when Jesus returned to heaven from whence he came and again shared the fullness of the glory of God with his Father.

Now these things are utterly unsearchable. These are things that the unredeemed mind cannot even begin to comprehend. These are things that an unsaved person looks at and reads and has no idea what it's speaking because a veil is over their mind and they cannot understand these heavenly glories, but what we see is the people of God, as we read this, we understand that what's happening here is that the incarnation of Christ, where he stepped down from heaven into human form, eternal God in human flesh, this human flesh, this humanity that he's taken on to and added, as it were, to his deity is about, after the cross, he is about to go back into heaven with that humanity and receive the glory that was his with the Father before the beginning of time. The incarnation would give way to his glorified state in heaven.

Now notice what he says there in verse 5. He says, "glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." In verse 1, he had said, "glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you." Beloved, God is glorified when Jesus Christ is glorified. The mutuality is striking. The glory of the Father and the glory of Christ are put side by side on equal terms. And they shared this equal glory with each other. Look at it there in verse 5 and marvel at the majesty of Jesus Christ as you read these words. He says, "glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." Jesus is saying, "Father, we shared something before Genesis 1:1. Before the world existed, you and I shared glory together. I had it with you. We shared that glory on equal terms." They shared equal glory with each other before the world began.

Now listen, beloved, this is really, in one sense, these things are unfathomable in their depths, but the point that we are making here is really not that difficult to grasp. Only, only someone who was God himself, only someone who was fully equal with God in every possible way, in every infinite way, only someone fully equal with God could say these things. None of us were with God before the world began. The angels were not always with God because they were created beings. Jesus is stepping out of time, going back into pre-eternity or pre-creation days and saying, "Father, I remember what it was like when we shared this glory together in the ineffable Godhead. We had that glory together. It's been veiled." What Jesus is saying is, "It's been veiled during the course of my incarnation." As we sing at Christmas time, "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see/ Hail the incarnate deity." He was fully God as he walked on earth, but his glory was hidden, it was veiled, better stated, it was veiled in his human flesh. Now what he's saying is, "Once I accomplish the purpose of the cross and I ascend back into heaven, receive me and let's return to sharing that glory that we always had beforehand." Only someone equal with God could say such things, and beloved, only someone equal with God would say such things and have them be true. What this tells us is that Jesus Christ shares the power, the life, the essence, and the glory of God. You can't miss it. Christ had this glory before you existed. He had it before his incarnation, we're working our way back in time. He had it before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had it before the flood. He had it before the Garden of Eden. He had it before the fall. He had it before God created the heavens and the earth. This is his eternal possession as a member of the Godhead. He shared fully in the glory of God.

Now, Scripture makes it plain that no one else has that glory except God himself. In Isaiah 42:8, we read this. God is speaking. He says, "I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols." That's Isaiah 42:8. God says, "I do not give my glory to anyone else." Later in Isaiah 48:11, God speaking says, "For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another." God is jealous of his own glory. He does not share that with anyone or anything else and Scripture is definitively clear about that. And yet here is Jesus praying, "Father, glorify me with the glory that we shared before the beginning of time, before the beginning of the world." He's claiming in prayer to the Father the entitlement to share in the glory of God and asking the Father to restore it to him after he does the work on the cross. There is an exclusivity to the glory of God and yet Jesus has it. The only way to reconcile those two things, the exclusivity of the glory of God and that Jesus Christ has the glory of God, is to understand that Jesus Christ himself is eternal God in human flesh. He has the glory of God.

Now look, that builds on what we've been saying all along in this series. You see how all of this builds on it and there's just this irrefutable argument that is built as you view these things coming together; any one standing alone would be sufficient to establish the deity of Christ. The Bible calls him God. He does the works that God does. He has the name of God. He has unity with God. He reveals God the Father. Now we see him sharing his glory. At some point when you see this sixth point that Jesus has God's glory, there should be a sense in your mind going on in which you say, "Well, yeah of course. If all of these other things are true, then he's obviously fully deity and if he's fully deity then he would obviously have the glory of God." The momentum of this just leads to those undeniable conclusions. He has the glory of God. We are right to pray to him. We are right to worship him. We are right to exalt him and to do nothing that would detract from the ascription of fullest, highest deity to him. In Christ all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form.

Now it took the early church a while to work out the implications of all of this for the first two or three centuries as attacks were made on the teaching of the deity of Christ. It took the church a while to learn how to articulate this in a way to protect it from error on so many different sides but they established in the creeds and Athanasius was heroic, for lack of a better term, heroic in his defense of the Trinity and of the deity of Christ. These things have been established for many, many centuries over the course of church history and, beloved, when we say these things and when we teach these things, understand that this isn't just one voice of one pastor in, you know, one city in the 21st century saying these things. This has been the conclusion of the people of God for millennia that these things have been studied together. There is a testimony of men of God across the millennia that affirm these things. Based on what Scripture teaches, there is this broad teaching of it.

Now, and why is that important? Why do I mention that? Well, in part to say this: there are so many fools on the internet and there are so many foolish people who will say foolish things like this, say that, you know, "I put aside all human books and I just studied Scripture for myself," and then they come up with some warmed-over heresy that

they think is expressing the truth of Scripture. Beloved, you should not fall for any of that. There's no excuse anywhere for anyone falling for that kind of a kind of proud arrogance that where someone takes upon himself and says, "I'm the one who overturns orthodox Christianity. I'm the one who redefines the person of Christ based on my personal study in the three years since I became a Christian." This is foolishness, and even if you don't have an acquaintance with church history, you should at least have an understanding that these are things that have been studied for centuries and defended for millennia by the best minds that have ever walked on the face of the earth, and there are some things that are just not open to question, and the deity of Christ is one of them. This is not open for discussion. It's not open for re-examination. These things are established based on the testimony of the word of God and as articulated by the best minds that God has put on the planet over the course of centuries. To deny it, let's put it this way, to knowingly deny the deity of Christ is to forfeit your soul. Jesus Christ is Lord. To say that he is not is to perpetrate the biggest lie that there could be told, and it is to look at God, it is to look at Christ who declared that he has the glory of God, it is to look at Christ and say, "No, I think you're a liar. You're not actually God as you claim to be." These are not simply theological discussions that we're having, beloved, these are things that go to the heart of what it means to believe and to deny these things is to forfeit your soul. It's that important.

Someone told me one time who denied the deity of Christ, said, "You know, I can't believe that God would condemn me just because I had a wrong opinion of Jesus." And I tried to help her understand that that was, you know, a very bad mistake to make. But you don't put these things, you don't put these things and test these things by human reason and what you think would be reasonable for God to do. No, God has revealed his truth in Christ, he has spoken, and the call is to repent and believe in Christ for your salvation, to confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. If anyone confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that God raised him from the dead, he shall be saved. You cannot, you cannot rip out the Lordship and deity of Christ from that confession and still have saving faith.

Stated differently, you and I are not free to make up our own opinion about who Jesus is. We don't get to make up our own view of Christ. That's just idolatry. To make up something that is not a god, a figment of your own imagination, and then to bow down and worship the figment of your own imagination, which ultimately is just going to end up looking a lot like you do, because that's what people do, they make a god after their own image. Too many people like the Jews in Jesus' day, "We will not have this man reign over us." Okay, don't have him reign over you, but you will bow and confess him as Lord one day, and then you'll find out for yourself his Lordship when he sends you away into eternal judgment, having rejected the only one that could save your soul. It's that important. It's that striking. It's that eternal in its consequences. And so we gladly, humbly, without apology, proclaim the lordship of Christ.

Now, one final point for this whole series, and the series went longer than I expected it to when I started, and as it often happens when I finish a book of the Bible, when I'm about to finish a lengthy series, there's a bittersweet aspect to my heart right now as we enter into this final point. It's a blessing to contemplate the glory of our Lord, isn't it? For every

true believer in Christ, to contemplate the glory of Christ is the highest exercise of our human faculties and so to contemplate finishing it and moving on to other important matters of faith in the days to come, still it's a little bit wistful to stop here, but we stop at the pinnacle. We've climbed to the top of Mount Everest in our contemplation of the Lordship of Christ now. In light of everything that we've said over the course of these weeks, this is the obvious and only conclusion, and you see it exercised in Scripture as well. If Jesus is God, eternal God in human flesh, then he is entitled to our worship, to ascribe to him, to bow to him in worship, in adoration, in submission, ascribing the highest place of all. Point number 7 here in the series, establishing the Lordship and deity of Christ, it's number 7: Jesus receives divine worship. He receives divine worship. He receives worship that is ascribed to God himself.

Now, the Bible has a highly defined concept of worship, and worship is to be given exclusively to God and to God alone. It's one of the 10 Commandments that we studied a year or two ago. In Exodus 20:3 and 5, we read this, God commanding the people of Israel in the moment, but setting down terms of the moral law that apply to all men everywhere at all times, says this, he says, "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not worship them or serve them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God." Okay, this is foundational to the moral law that God alone is to be worshiped. We are to worship God. We are to worship only God. We are to worship no one else. And God says, "I'm jealous about this. I defend this with my power." The name of God, the person of God, the essence of God is sanctified. It is set apart so that there are no competing claimants to our worship and our devotion. God says, "Don't have anyone else in that place. Don't worship anyone else. Don't serve anyone else. I'm a jealous God. I take this seriously."

Now, when you read in the New Testament, you find something very interesting here; I'm going to give you three different examples of it. Whenever someone is wrongly ascribing worship to the wrong being, they are immediately rebuked and told, "Stop that. Do not do that." I want to take you to three passages, two in the book of Acts, one in the book of Revelation.

Turn to Acts 10 with me. Remember, our overarching point here is that Jesus receives divine worship. God says, "Don't worship anyone else but me," and in the New Testament, you see that wrong worship is immediately rebuked. Acts 10, let's start in verse 24. You remember that Peter was sent to preach to a man named Cornelius, and it says in verse 24, "on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends." Verse 25, "When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him." He ascribed a glory to Peter and what did Peter do? Verse 26, "Peter lifted him up, saying, 'Stand up; I too am a man.'" In other words, Peter says, "Don't do that. I am not an object of worship. I'm a man just like you. I'll fulfill what the Lord sent me here to do, but you are not to worship me. That is a wrong ascription of worship." Peter stopped him in his tracks as soon as it began to happen.

Look at Acts 14. It happened to Peter, it happened to Paul, you could say the two leading apostles in the book of Acts. And let's start in verse 8 just to set the full context so you

can see where people would go astray here. Verse 8, Acts 14, "Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, 'Stand upright on your feet.' And he sprang up and began walking. And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, 'The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!'" They were ascribing deity to Paul because of the miracle that they had just witnessed. Verse 12, "Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, 'Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.'" "Stop this worship. It's misdirected. Don't do this. Don't engage in false worship. We're men just like you." They refused for the worship to take place.

The Apostle John in Revelation 22, same thing. Revelation 22, here John is the one offering the misdirected worship. In verse 8 of Revelation 22, the apostle at the conclusion of all of his revelation and visions and the record of it all, says in verse 8, "I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me." He was in the presence of a supernatural being and he fell down to worship an angel. But the angel said to him, verse 9, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book." "Don't worship me. Yes, I'm an angel, we're of a different order, but we're just servants of the living God together. Don't worship me. Worship God." In perfect keeping with Exodus 20, he corrects John who by this time was thoroughly exhausted by all of the revelation and fantastic visions that he had seen; it was all overwhelming to him. He had to have been somewhat disoriented in it all. The angel says, "Stand up. Don't worship me. We worship God alone."

And so we see again and again and again, wrong worship is immediately rebuked, immediately corrected, and those who are on the receiving end of it are appalled at the thought and stop it in its tracks. This is what happens when wrong worship takes place, it's immediately rebuked. Now, beloved, that leads us naturally into this kind of concluding question for our time together in this study. What happens when worship is directed to Jesus? When men worship Jesus, how does Jesus respond? Well, he accepts the worship. He accepts the worship, and the Bible affirms it as being a proper response to the person of Christ. The same Bible that says, "You shall have no other gods before me, you shall not worship them or serve them," the same Bible that says that describes worship being directed to Jesus and doesn't correct it. Indeed, it affirms it. That could only be right, that could only be proper if Jesus Christ is God himself.

After the resurrection of Christ, the disciples worshiped him. Look at Matthew 28. We read about the resurrection of Christ in the first ten verses of Matthew 28. The Jews try to concoct a story to deny it in verses 11 to 15. Now we go to verse 16 in Matthew 28 and

we read this, "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted." What's Jesus' response to that? Does he rebuke them like Peter did? Like Paul did? Like the angel did? Nothing of the sort, beloved. If ever there was a time for Jesus to rebuke his disciples, it would certainly be when they worshiped him, if he was not God in human flesh. If he's God in human flesh, then their worship is perfectly correct and proper. Jesus responds to the worship and says to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." "Yes, you worship me correctly. I have all authority. And based on my authority," verse 19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name," singular name, one name of God, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons, three conscious persons, all sharing in the single name, the single essence, the single glory of God. "Teaching them to observe," verse 20, "all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age." They worshiped him, and he expanded on the propriety of their worship. He didn't rebuke them.

Look at Luke 24. Again, after the resurrection. Luke 24. Let's start in verse 44, because this will kind of bring us full circle to where we started on this as we talked about how the Old Testament laid the foundation for our understanding of the Lordship of Christ. "Then he said to them," then Christ said to his disciples, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Now watch what happens here in verse 45. "Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." He supernaturally illumined their minds to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures to which he had just been referring. So there was a super – oh, this is so important – he opened their minds. What happened next is the question? When God opens someone's mind to the truth of Scripture, what do they do? Verse 46, he "said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.'" He opened their minds. He reiterated the gospel to them that the Christ would suffer and be raised on the third day. And in response to that sacrificial penal atonement that he accomplished for his people at the cross, they would go out and preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations. This is a colossal moment in redemptive history. Christ is risen from the dead. His disciples are in front of him. He supernaturally opens their minds and places in them, so to speak, the fullness and a summary of the very gospel itself, and with that fullness of mind, he says, "You go out into all of the nations starting right here in Jerusalem." I mean, this is utterly colossal. This is cosmic in its significance. "You're witnesses that I've just supernaturally equipped. Go out and do it now."

And what happens? Verse 50, "he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven." Now, beloved, what comes next comes from those whose minds had been opened to understand the Scripture. Christ had deposited understanding in their minds and told them, "You are witnesses to go out into all of the nations and to proclaim this

eternal gospel." And they watched as he ascended into heaven. What did they do? What was their response to that? Verse 52, "they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God." These men, chosen by Christ, witnesses of Christ, illumined by Christ, their minds supernaturally opened, and with those supernaturally enabled minds, they didn't make any mistake. They worshiped Christ. Jesus receives divine worship.

Now, that's the disciples collectively. We've looked at this several times over the course of this series. One last time, let's go to John 20. John 20. You see it in Matthew. You see it in Luke. You see it in John. Verse 24, I won't apologize for reading this yet again, because we have here illustrated in the life of Thomas what saving faith looks like. Could we ever talk about the elements of saving faith too much? Could we ever talk about the glory of Christ too much? Could we ever talk about the appropriate response of worship to him too much?

John 20:24, "Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.' Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.'" Christ presented himself to Thomas in his resurrection. He said, "Thomas, I'm right here for your personal verification." And he commands him, "Do not disbelieve, but believe." "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved," Acts 4:12 says, actually, Acts 16:31.

And what does Thomas do in response to a direct command from Christ who is in his immediate presence and who is obviously leading him out of unbelief into belief? How does Thomas respond? Verse 28, "Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'" He worshiped him. He places Christ in the throne of his heart and bows down and worships him. "Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" Jesus, in other words, here's what Thomas says, he affirms Thomas' belief and, beloved, Jesus Christ accepts the worship that Thomas ascribes to him. Thomas said to Jesus, "You are my Lord and my God." Jesus does not rebuke him like Peter, like Paul, like the angel. He affirms it. He accepts it. Only God could rightly accept worship like that. How can Jesus do that? He's eternal God in human flesh.

Beloved, what we've seen over the course of these weeks, we've seen not simply that Jesus is Lord, but we've seen such an extensive statement from Scripture of the grounds by which we make that confession. You need to know these things for yourself. You need to be able to rehearse these things in your mind for yourself. You need a faith that is grounded not in emotion. You need a faith that is grounded not in some kind of silly experience. You need a faith that is not grounded simply in what your parents taught you or teach you. You need a faith that is grounded in Scripture itself and the abundance of testimony that Scripture makes to these things. Beloved, because when Scripture speaks

to us in these things, something is happening. The Spirit of God is doing something in our hearts. It is imparting true faith to us. It is revealing, the Spirit of God is revealing Christ to us and calling us to believe in him in a saving, submissive way that yields ourselves entirely to him in a wholehearted response of life-time worship because that's what you do in the presence of eternal God in human flesh. Romans 10:17 says, "faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ." If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Only God can save. Only one with the attributes and power and authority and essence of God can save a sinner who's rebelled against God himself and Scripture calls on us to believe Jesus is Lord. Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, and the promise of Scripture is, you respond to Christ like that, you will be saved.

Beloved, do you believe? Have you called on Christ like that for your own salvation from sin? May the Spirit of God help you to precisely that point.

Let's pray together.

Lord, we bow before you. With Thomas we say, "My Lord and my God!" Others can deny your deity, Father, if they must. Lord Jesus, others can deny that you are one with the Father, if they must. We stand apart from them. We separate ourselves from them. We will not go with the idolatrous crowd. Your Spirit has led us to the truth, the truth that you are eternal God in human flesh. We bow in worship. We pray that you might open the eyes of the hearts of those who, like Thomas, have not yet believed. Father, lead them and command them through your word, "Stop disbelieving. Stop your unrepentant ways." O Spirit of God, work in their hearts and call them with an internal, irresistible call that says, "Now it is time for you to believe," and draw them to the Son whom you glorify. Father, continue to lead us and continue to build in us a Christian mind. There is a God. Scripture is true. And Jesus is Lord. May those unshakable, foundational truths set the course and trajectory for the remainder of our lives under the influence of your Holy Spirit, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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