

Jesus Christ: *The infinite Value of His Worth*
Various Passages

"He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power."

Hebrews 1:3

Introduction: These last weeks we have explored the depths of **gospel**, the good news of salvation offered to sinful man by a glorious and loving God through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is a simple enough message for children to understand by faith, yet the depths of which will keep us learning and longing for eternity. We've talked through the **nature of God Himself**, how He is Creator, Sovereign, and Glorious, creating all things so that He would be worshipped forever, satisfying the deepest longings and appetites of mankind. Last week we dedicated time to look at the **nature of our sin**, how we are born into sin, and thus are slaves to that sin, and under the wrath of God. We deserve punishment and justice since we have violated God's glory, and the most consistent, fair, and appropriate action God could and should take is to punish us for an eternity. Admittedly, that is **bad news** (you think?!?!), but the darkest of night produces the most spectacular of dawns, and understanding the depth of our plight allows us to comprehend the **magnitude of the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf!**

Jesus seems to be a confusing person to most people. I don't mean confusing in the sense that they don't have a picture in their mind of who He is, or that they categorically reject His existence, I mean they **actually cannot understand what to make of Him**. Some believe Him to be a **revolutionary leader**, one who pushed back against religion and politics to lead in the social issues of the day. One of my friends who has rejected the Bible's teaching on God's sovereignty over gender, marriage, and family said they love the Jesus that loved minorities, served communities, and prioritized care of the earth. While these are clearly good things, it is equally clear that they have made Jesus into someone who helps advance **their beliefs and values, not the other way around**. Others believe Jesus to be a **moral teacher** and **eschatological preacher**, one that gave us an example to follow and proclaimed the imminent arrival of the apocalypse. Back in my seminary days we learned about the *Jesus Seminar*, a group of 150 critical "scholars" and lay people who tried to determine what sayings and actions of Jesus were actually historical and which were simply the stuff of myth. Jesus was good in that He taught a moral life, but He was NOT divine, real, nor did He have any true bearing on our lives. Finally, some are simply **indifferent toward Jesus**. He may or may not have lived, seemed like a good dude, it probably be good to live like Him, but again He has no daily or eternal significance in my life. Each of these views is confused and damnable, so clearing up the real Jesus is essential.

There are **2 major reasons to understand the person of Jesus completely:**

1. We can only love who we know - Apathetic worship derives from a weak or stunted view of Jesus. Jesus is the focal point of our worship, since He exhibits the unparalleled magnificence since He is the unique and ONLY person who satisfies the complex longings of the human heart. When we stop our pursuit of knowing the excellencies of Christ as provided in Scripture, we have an emaciated appetite and can only draw from the past for present longings. This happens in marriage, doesn't it? When we stop pursuing our spouse and cease desiring to know them, we easily lose a passion we once had. I love watching my wife grow in grace, and have observed her take up an "oldest" sisterly role in her family since her mom died last year, becoming a counselor and trusted ear. Seeing new expressions of her character deepens my love and affection for her. Now, none of us can love Christ completely, nor do we

love Him as much as we should. But if we are born again, we have a desire to love Him at all. That love is a gift of grace and should be cultivated each day since He is our good shepherd: "***I know my own and my own know me.***" (John 10:14).

2. We are prone to a "moralistic" false gospel - There are always false gospels around, but the one that is most prominent and dangerous around us is a teaching of *morality* as the highest goal and achievement. Jesus is leveraged as a moral teacher, and His teachings are harvested to try to make "good" people better. For sure, Jesus taught a morality of His kingdom, but this was **NEVER** a means of **salvation** but only what condemned or a result of new life given by Him alone. In fact, Jesus said things like this:

"Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." **Matt. 5:20**

"Your therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." **Matt. 5:48**

Jesus taught the absolute impossibility of gaining salvation on our own, since even our good works would be filthy rags before Him (Isa. 64:6). Thus, any goal that has at its core to try to simply make people better falls short of salvation itself, and is a dangerous poison to the hearer.

So this morning, we will look at the **nature of Jesus**, who He is in His personhood, to set the stage for understanding His work on the cross next week.

Let's start with a **theological terms** that will make you smarter than your friends. It is the term "*Hypostatic Union*", a term that sounds more complicated than it means, yet doesn't touch the depth of what it describes! It simply means the *personal union of Jesus' two complete natures, the fact that He is fully divine AND fully human*. The Greek word "*hupostatis*", when translated into Latin throughout church history came to denote NOT sameness in the Godhead (God's one essence) but distinctness (the 3 Persons", and the word in English referred to "person". The Bible is clear in its teaching of these 2 natures, but we must also remember that there is **great mystery here**. When we try to say too much or clarify the mystery itself, we often overstep or overreach in what the Bible intended. In fact, it is this mystery that we will continue to delve into throughout eternity, like an *blooming onion* (yummm) that is layer upon layer.

THE DEITY OF JESUS:

"I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior." (Isa. 43:11) "But I am the LORD you God from the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, and besides me there is no Savior." (Hosea 13:4)

Jesus had to be God in order to be a Savior, since only God declares Himself to be Savior.

Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, eternally begotten, not made or created, but is one is **essence with the Father**. He is the **exact image of the person of the Father** and reflection of His glory (Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3) being in all things like Him. Genesis 1:1 says that God created the world, and John says all things were created by the Word (John 1:3), Hebrews 1:2 says God made the world by His Son, and Paul says that God created all things by Jesus Christ (Col. 1:16). He origins are eternal (Micah 5:2), and He has neither beginning of days nor end of life (Heb. 7:3). Jesus Himself claimed oneness with the Father, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30), Paul said "In Him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily

form" (Col. 2:9), and also said that Jesus was God made manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). Jesus is, forever was, and forever will be God, since God the Father and God the Son are One and there is no others.

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS:

We read this morning the glorious passage that "*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" (John 1:14). He is a mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5), since He could represent both. He was born of a woman, under the Law (Gal. 4:4), and grew as a human child does (Luke 2:52). He lived our life with the same limitations of humanity, depending on the Father and Spirit like we do. He slept (Mark 4:38) when He was tired, wept at the death of a friend (John 11:35), and experienced suffering, though He deserved only glory, to leave us an example to follow (1 Pet. 2:21). He faced temptation in the weakness of humanity so that He can sympathize with us as in our humanity (Heb. 4:15) as our great High Priest. Though He could do miracles, showing His power over nature, sickness, and even death, He intentionally limited the access of divine attributes and was dependent on the Father and Spirit. Jesus lived our lives, but did it perfectly fulfilling all the Law and prophets (Matt. 5:17).

Perhaps one of the clearest passages to understand when it comes to the deity and humanity of Jesus is **Philippians 2:6-8**,

*"Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the **form of God**, did not count equality with God and thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the **form of a servant**, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

Three things that this helps us see in terms of Jesus' two natures:

- 1) Jesus was both the *form of God* AND the *form of a servant* - the word "form" is the Greek word *morphe*, which means the inner substance or very nature of a thing, not its outer shape or appearance. He both possessed the *morphe* of God and equality with God. Nothing is equal to God but God! But He also took on the *morphe* of a servant by taking on the appearance of man.
- 2) Jesus emptied Himself by addition, not subtraction - Though He was rich, He became poor (2 Cor. 8:9). Jesus did not empty Himself of Deity, but through humility and obedience, **TOOK ON** humanity. He poured out by taking, and emptied by adding. He did NOT pour something *out of Himself*, but rather *poured out Himself!*
- 3) In doing this, He was able to go to the cross as **both** a *divinely perfect sacrifice* AND a *humanly worthy sacrifice*, which is why He was given the name Lord, the name to which every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

Now, to answer the question, "*why is this so important?*", let's look at two essential aspects to salvation that required a Divine Man to fulfill:

Two Natures @ work in salvation

The situation mankind finds himself: God requires perfection in order to be in relationship with humanity, we are by nature children of wrath and under punishment (Eph. 2:1-3), so God is unable to welcome us back to Him without payment for sin. The only way we could ever pay for our sin is an eternity under His wrath, which obviously would never be paid off, or find another to take our place. So:

Jesus had to be God, since only God is Savior (as we already saw in Isa. 43:11), and only God could satisfy the requirements of God. But only a man could stand in the place of man. We know that the whole OT system of animal sacrifice only covered sin, since it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to **take away sins** (Heb. 10:4). We also know that we are **guilty because we are children of Adam**, and through his sin, death spread to all men (Rom. 5:12). So we needed a new and better Adam, "*so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many will be made righteous*" (Rom. 5:18-19). It had to be a human, flesh and blood person to take our place, to bear God's wrath. That means that Jesus is not only **immensely unique**, He is *infinitely worthy*.

Two Natures and the Value of the One Sacrificed

We can rightfully ask: *HOW can the death of one person suffering on a cross for a few hours pay for the sins of a multitude of people and save them from an eternity of suffering?* I mean, someone dying for us is great, but how did it work?

1) **Jesus is One of INFINITE WORTH and Perfect obedience** - We all love stories of sacrifice: the soldier who falls on a grenade to save his brothers in arms, the mother willingly enduring risk to deliver her baby, even though it costs her life, the father who pushes his kids away from traffic, bearing the brunt force on his own life. We understand the life-for-life idea, and in some ways, the greater the sacrifice, the greater the value. "Take my life for theirs" is valuable, but limited. Paul himself understood this and was willing to offer his life for his kinsmen (Rom. 9:3), but he knew the limit of that offer. We can say, "Take my life if it would save 1000", but each of us is limited by our own life and frailty.

Jesus is of INFINITE WORTH and IMMEASURABLE VALUE, since He is God. That is why Peter said, "*knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver and gold, but with the (by quality) precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*" (1 Pet. 1:18-19; John 1:29). His blood was precious because Jesus was the spotless, sinless, holy, perfect, preeminent, glorious, powerful, and humble God become flesh. His infinite worth was **able to save because His worth was greater than our sin, so the substitute actually was effective.**

2) **Jesus' perfect obedience satisfied what was required for salvation** - We all need to have our guilt and sin removed, but we also need righteousness to be accepted by God. Jesus' **active obedience** in keeping the Law and **passive obedience** in offering Himself as a substitute satisfied both. He not only became sin on our behalf to pay for our sin, but imputed or gave us HIS righteousness so that we could be worthy of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:17-21). No one, I mean no one, could fulfill what Jesus did. Even if all the myriads of angels without blame would offer themselves, or countless martyrs would sacrifice themselves for the life of another, none of these would be equivalent to the payment needed.

Our salvation required a sacrifice of infinite value, and only our great God and Savior Jesus Christ has such value!

As we consider the excellencies of Christ, we not only are blown away by His work FOR us on the cross, but also who He is and will be forever. Is this the Christ that you treasure in your heart? Is this the Christ that you worship? One of the realities that is being revealed in our hearts these last months is this: **is Jesus real to us, His personal work and life, or is He more of a concept or construct?** The answer to this question is the difference between worship and misery, joy and sorrow, love and indifference.

*"The good news is that the one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him. In his great love, **God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust him. He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted Christ's sacrifice and that God's wrath against us had been exhausted. He now calls us to repent of our sins and to trust in Christ alone for forgiveness. If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into new life, and eternal life with God.**"*

NEXT WEEK: Jesus' work on the cross as a substitute and propitiation

For Further Reading: *"Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ"* by John Piper, a book that focuses and meditates on the worth of Jesus Christ and calls us to think deeply about Him for our greatest joy.

Digging deeper in personal evaluation:

- Read Philippians 2:5-11 - How do we have the "same mind among ourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus"? How does this affect how we treat each other? How would understanding this in light of the person and work of Jesus Christ affect how we view ourselves, this world, and even the time we face right now?
- Read 1 Peter 2:18-25 - What do we learn from Jesus' example in how we handle and deal with unjust suffering?
- When you worship Jesus, what comes to your mind? How do you deepen your understanding of His worth and value?