

# Who is this Man, Jesus?

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Date: 28 February 2021

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Please follow along on the screen, in your bulletin, or on your own Bible. In Matthew 8, verse 23, we read, And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.
- And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swum by the waves. But he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, Save us, Lord, we are perishing.
- And he said to them, Why are you afraid, O you of little faith? Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.
- And the men marveled, saying, What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him? And when he came to the other side, to the country of the gatherings, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way.
- And behold, they cried out, What have you to do with us, O son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time? Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them.
- [ 1 : 2 2 ] And the demons begged him, saying, If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs. And he said to them, Go. So they came out and went into the pigs.
- And behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. The herd's men fled, and going into the city, they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men.
- And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region. And getting into a boat, he crossed over and came to his own city.
- And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on their bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, Take heart, my son, your sins are forgiven.
- And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, This man is blaspheming. But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil in your heart?
- [ 2 : 3 8 ] And which is easier, to say, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Rise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.
- And he then said to the paralytic, Rise, pick up your bed, and go home. And he rose and went home. When the crowd saw it, they were afraid, And they glorified God, and had given such authority to men.
- Amen. The Word of God. Great. Thank you so much, Edie and Iris. And good morning, everybody. It is great to be back with you again.
- If you don't know me, my name is Kevin. I'm one of the leaders here. And it really is a privilege to be able to speak to us this morning from God's Word. Most of this morning, I've just had this phrase in my heart, Who is worthy of such a task as bringing God's Word to us this morning?
- And I really do feel the gravity and the soberness of this this morning. And so I wonder if you can join me as we pray together. Let's ask God to really speak to us.

[ 3 : 46 ] We don't need to hear the opinions of me or anyone else. We want God to speak to us. And so let's come before His Word. Let's come and pray and ask Christ to speak to us. Will you join me? Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, The Triune God, The Lord of Heaven and Earth, The one we sang about this morning.

God, we come before you this morning with a sense of fear and trembling, A sense of soberness and trepidation, That, God, we are in your presence. We come before your Word.

God, it's astounding that you ask us to expand your Word and look at it. God, I pray that you'll speak to us this morning. Jesus, won't you help us to see more of you in your Word?

Father, won't you help us to not come to your Word again this morning with a sense of familiarity, But to really see afreshly who you are.

God, won't you also grow our faith this morning as we look at this passage. God, we come, some of us, with weak faith. Jesus, thank you for your mercy and your compassion.

[ 4 : 57 ] Won't you grow our faith today, Lord? Won't you help us to see you for who you are? Father, we also want to just, We really want to pray for our congregation. We want to pray for our city.

We want to pray for those, God, that are maybe hurting or struggling, Those that are experiencing trauma or difficulty. God, we pray for your mercy and grace to really reach out to us today.

Through your Word, won't you comfort us, God? Won't you draw us near? Spirit of God, we come before you this morning, Very cognizant of our need for you.

And so come and have your way, God, we pray. God, this morning we also just want to pray for some of the families in our church That have recently had babies. We think of Chris and Fiona and their little girl Elodie.

We thank you for the safe arrival of her this week, God. And we really pray for your favor and your blessing on the Thornton family and household. God, we want you to bless them.

[ 5 : 55 ] We think of Sandy from the office who had her son this week, Sandy and Ben. And their three boys. God, we pray for your favor to rest on them.

And God, this morning we want to also just pray for Dina and Anando And their imminent arrival of their young one, God. And we pray for your favor to rest upon Dina and the doctors as she gives birth in the coming weeks.

We really just want to bring them before you. God, we as a church come before you because we need you, Lord. We pray for your grace and your favor to rest on us this morning. Come and speak to us from your word. We pray these things in your wonderful and gracious name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. In January 2007, the Washington Post conducted this social sciences experiment where a violinist went down to Union Station in Washington, D.C.

And there for 45 minutes, he opened up his violin case on the floor of the train station and played six Bach concertos.

[ 6 : 57 ] And he was there for 45 minutes or so, and about a thousand people walked past him. Only six people stopped to listen to the music. One of them being a three-year-old boy who was quickly scolded by his mom for making her late for the train.

She kind of pulled his arm and dragged him off as this three-year-old try to listen to this violinist. But out of the thousand people, only one person actually recognized the violinist for who he was.

He is the world-famous Joshua Bell, one of the most prolific violinists in the world. And there he was playing on his \$10 million Stradivari violin, a free concert for all to see, but very few noticed him.

In the 45 minutes that he played some of the most complicated and technical musical pieces that you can, he received \$27 in his violin case. But what was fascinating was just two nights before, he had played at a theater in Boston to a sell-out crowd, many of whom had paid hundreds of dollars for their tickets to watch this world-famous violinist play in front of them.

And the point of the experiment was that when we see somebody great and awesome, but we see them in a very ordinary setting, how very often we miss them for who they really are.

[ 8 : 15 ] How often we can be blinded to who it is that's right in front of our very eyes, just because we see them in the very ordinary. We're working through Matthew's Gospel, and we are halfway through Chapter 8.

And again this morning, we are going to look at three miracles that Matthew lines up for us. First, Jesus calms a momentous storm. Second, he drives our demons out of these two demon-possessed men.

And thirdly, Jesus heals a paralytic. But just like the commuters in Washington, D.C., it's so easy for us to see Jesus and yet be blinded to who it is that stands in front of us.

Matthew wants to help us not just be so familiar, so blinded with Jesus, that we miss who it is that stands before us. And so will you join me as we look at this first passage, this first pericope.

Pericope is kind of a section in Scripture. Look at this first section with me. Jesus and his disciples have left Capernaum. Remember last week, Jesus has done these three miracles.

[ 9 : 18 ] He then issues this call for people to follow him. One man says, I'll follow you wherever you go. And another man says, Jesus, I'll follow you, but I've just got to take care of some family business. I'm just waiting for the inheritance to come.

And Jesus challenges both of these men. And they then get in a boat to cross the Lake of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Galilee. But actually, it's a lake. And so Jesus' disciples are now in the boat.

They go across the Lake of Galilee to the other side. And while they're on the water, this massive storm emerges on the lake. And the Greek word used here in verse 24 is actually the word seismos, from where we get the English word seismic, as in earthquake activity.

It's the Greek word for an earthquake. And what Matthew's telling us is a storm that is so ferocious, it's like an earthquake has come upon the lake. Such was the ferocity of the storm.

And the boat is threatening to sink. The disciples do what most of us would do. They wake up Jesus. Jesus is asleep in the boat. They wake him up and they say, Lord, save us.

[ 10 : 22 ] We are perishing. Literally, we are going to our destruction. And Jesus gets up. And with a word, he rebukes the wind. He rebukes the storm. And the lake is transformed from this ferocious storm almost instantly into this perfectly still day out in the lake.

The disciples are left astounded. And look at what they say in verse 27. Someone pops up and says, what sort of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?

And that's really the question that Matthew wants us to ask this morning. What sort of man is this? Who is this man? Who is this man that we've sung about and worshipped and adored this morning?

Who is this man in whose name we've just prayed this morning? Who is this man that the Old Testament scriptures foretell and predict and that the gospel writers tell us about again and again and again?

Who is this man called Jesus? In all of these accounts, Matthew wants us to see a number of things about Jesus. And Matthew is building up to something this morning.

[ 11 : 27 ] He's going to start off slow, but he's building up towards his climactic point. Now it's worth noticing that in all three of these accounts, there is a different audience in view.

A different audience that views Jesus or encounters him. In the first miracle, it's the disciples. Probably the 12 disciples that he later calls to be apostles. They are in the boat with him and they're astounded.

And they still come into grips with who is this man that's before them. In the second pericope, it's not so much the disciples, even though they are probably there, who Matthew highlights, it's the herdsmen and then the Gentile townsfolk who come and see Jesus.

And who are astounded by who he is. And asking this question, who is this man? And then in the third story, it's the religious leaders and the scribes and the Pharisees that are asking the question, just who do you think that you are?

And the point that Matthew wants us to get here is that every human being on the planet, whether Christians or seekers, whether religious or non-religious, whether educated or uneducated, right-wing, left-wing, cultural elites, manual laborers, every person needs to grapple with the question, who is this man called Jesus?

[ 12 : 42 ] Each one of these pericopes, Jesus reveals something about himself, which is both challenging, but also comforting. And that's one of the ways that you actually know you've encountered the real Jesus, not just a Jesus of your imagination.

The real Jesus will always at the same time both comfort us and challenge us all at the same time. So let's look at this first story together. Jesus and his authority over creation.

One of the wonderful things about this passage is we get to see both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus really side by side, juxtaposed together. We see Jesus' humanity.

He's exhausted. He's worn out. He's tired. He's been ministering all day. There are demands from him. He gets into the boat and he crashes. He's fast asleep. But at the same time, we see his divinity.

He wakes up and with almost a single word, he commands creation and creation listens to his word. He's still almost instantaneously. And while it's true that this passage reveals both his humanity and his divinity, Matthew really wants us to see the grandeur of his divinity here.

[ 13 : 56 ] In ancient literature, the seas are often pictured as a sign or a symbol of chaos and disorder. And it's God who has the authority to bring order to the disorder, order to the chaos.

We see this throughout a lot of ancient writing, but we see this in the Old Testament and the New Testament again. We remember this when we preached in the book of Revelation a couple of years ago.

In the book of Revelation, the sea is often tumultuous. It's full of chaos and disorder. But whenever there's a picture of the sea before God's throne, it's crystal clear. It's described as being clear as glass.

God is the one who brings order to the chaos. Likewise, in the Old Testament, Psalm 89 says this, Matthew is telling us something.

But notice, Jesus doesn't pray to God in this instance. He simply addresses the storm directly. Sally Lloyd-Jones, who wrote a wonderful children's Bible, she says it like this.

[ 15 : 09 ] She says it beautifully. She says, When Jesus speaks, he speaks as one by whom and for whom all things are made.

The one who, as Hebrews 1 says, holds all things together, whether seas or weather, the very cosmos, Jesus holds them all together by the word of his power.

It's almost like a dog that has been trained by its master to obey his voice. Jesus says one word and the storm is stilled. Matthew says, Matthew is telling us here that Jesus carries all authority over all creation, over all nature.

There's nothing in the created world which is outside of his authority. Now, look with me for a second at Jesus' interaction with his disciples. Because I think this is one of the main points here.

It's quite amazing to think that these seasoned fishermen, who would have spent years on the water, spent many nights on the water throughout the years, they are absolutely terrified by this earthquake-like storm that has arisen on the lake.

[ 16 : 22 ] These storms were quite common on the Lake of Galilee because of the geography and where it was placed. This was nothing particularly unusual. And yet still the disciples are absolutely terrified.

And the disciples are convinced it's the end of their life. But notice the first thing that Jesus does. He challenges their fear and he calls them to grow in faith.

Look what he says here. He says, Why are you afraid, O you of little faith? Jesus isn't asking this because he's unsure of the answer, but because like the parables, he's probing them, he's pushing them, he's wanting them to ask that question of themselves.

Why are we so afraid? What's getting at us? What's causing this fear to arise? Jesus is asking them to see for themselves who he really is.

Now in the scripture, fear and faith are not mutually exclusive. What that means is to have one doesn't mean you cannot have the other.

[ 17 : 27 ] To have faith doesn't mean that you can't have fear in your life. And likewise, to experience fear doesn't mean that you have no faith. They're not mutually exclusive. But they're also not equal.

One will always trump over the other. Or another way of saying that is one will always have supremacy over the other. Either your faith will rule your fear, or otherwise your fears will diminish your faith.

Friends, what fear has disproportionate grip on your life at the moment? What fear has disproportionate grip on your heart this morning?

What fears drive us to work so hard? To say things that we cannot believe that we say? To do things that we hate to do?

But somehow we feel like we are unable to not do them. Friends, what fears drive us to put on a facade? To present some image that isn't really the real us?

[ 18 : 31 ] Friends, for those of us that are Christians, what fear is causing us to compromise this morning? To engage in some sinful behavior that is both destructive to us, destructive to others? Friends, most importantly, what fears are keeping us from bringing our lives into the light?

From genuinely engaging in repentance and humility before God? Look what happens here in this passage. On the one hand, Jesus accepts their weak faith.

As Douglas O'Donnell says, Jesus doesn't say, You want me to do what? I'm not stopping the storm until I see some real faith. Wake me up again when your faith is stronger, you cowards.

Jesus doesn't respond like that. He knows their faith is little. In Mark's gospel, he actually says, You have no faith. But Jesus doesn't, He doesn't shun them. He doesn't push them away.

Jesus accepts them where they are. Weak faith and all. He hears their prayers. He stops the sea. He steals the storm. And friends, this shows that even little faith is still faith.

[ 19 : 34 ] And that Jesus helps us however we come to Him. Such is His grace. Such is His compassion. That Jesus will save even weak in faith disciples. And yet, on the other hand, notice Jesus is not flattened by weak faith.

He wants us to see Him for who He is. And that's why Jesus doesn't say, Oh, you poor things. Oh, come and let me help you. Jesus doesn't say that. With the word, He calms the ravaging sea.

With the word, He stills the storms. But then He turns to them and He says, Why are you so afraid? One old commentator, Matthew Henry, put it like this. Jesus does not rebuke them for disturbing Him with their prayers, but for disturbing themselves with their fears.

In the scriptures, faith is not simply a passive acceptance of theological truth. To be a person of faith is not just to say, I believe that what the Bible says, historically or intellectually or academically.

To be a person of faith is to have wholehearted confidence in who God is. As Douglas O'Donnell says, It's courageous confidence in exactly who Jesus is. A faith that doesn't dismiss our fears or mock at them or laugh at them, but a faith that somehow envelops them and swallows them up.

[ 20 : 52 ] In the New Testament, that's the kind of faith we see exhibited. It's a certainty of the kind of faith that we see Jesus commending, as we saw last week. A leper comes to Jesus and says, Jesus, if you will, you can heal me.

A centurion comes to Jesus and says, Jesus, I know you have authority. Just say the word. This is the kind of faith, this bold confidence in who Jesus is, that Jesus is constantly commending.

A faith that's not found in ourselves, but found in who He is. One of the most famous passages in the New Testament is Hebrews chapter 11, and it speaks about this.

It speaks about these men and women who in the ages past exhibited this courageous confidence in who God is. Listen to how Hebrews 11 explains this. It says, Friends, this is courageous, confident faith in who God is.

And the writer goes on and he says, therefore, since this is the kind of faith of those that have gone before us, he says, therefore, let us exhibit the same kind of faith. Therefore, since we are surrounded by this cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside the weight and the sin, the things that hold us back, the things that hinder our faith, things that cling to us, and let us run with endurance, with steadfastness, the race that Christ has called us to, full of courageous faith, looking to Jesus, the founder and the perfecter of our faith.

[ 22 : 54 ] It's amazing that Jesus is the founder of our faith. Our faith is rooted in Him. But Jesus is also the perfecter of our faith. Jesus doesn't say, listen, I'll give you faith, but then it's up to you.

You sort yourself out. Jesus comes and says, as you get to know me, as you get to trust me, as you bring your fears and submission to me, I will grow your faith.

I'll perfect your faith. Your faith will grow from one degree to the next. Keep your eyes fixed on me. Jesus is the founder and the perfecter of our faith.

Friends, at Watermark Church, I think we're quite good at accepting, or understanding, that Jesus accepts us where we're at.

We're quite aware that Jesus is here for the weary and the broken. That the downcasts and those who feel beaten. We're very aware, and we speak often, that we don't need to put on an image.

[ 23 : 54 ] We can come to Jesus just as we are, broken and as we are, because we have a perfect Savior. And that's so clear. The Gospel is so clear on that. But friends, do we equally know that Jesus wants to call us to have courageous faith?

Rooted in who He is. We look at the disciples here, and at the beginning of their journey, their faith is weak, and they're still grappling. They're still trying to make sense. Their faith is fledging.

Who is this Jesus? But a couple of years later, we read in the book of Acts, they are bold and they're courageous. They are standing up for justice. They're pushing back darkness. They're preaching the Gospel.

They get persecuted, thrown in jail. They go back to the town square, exactly where they're arrested, and they carry on. Sometimes they're thrown in jail. Sometimes they are martyred. They are killed for their belief in Jesus.

Sometimes they are arrested. They don't give up. They surrender their possessions. They embrace persecution. And friends, the reason Jesus has put Watermark Church in Hong Kong at this time, for such a time as this, is that we too will be in some ways like the disciples.

[ 25 : 00 ] We will boldly proclaim who Jesus is. We will stand up for truth and righteousness. We will push back darkness. We will stand with the marginalized. We will embrace persecution, and preach, and declare to our city that Jesus is King, that He rules and He reigns, that there is one true God, and that His name is Jesus.

But friends, how are we ever going to plant churches, and send out missionaries, and evangelize the lost, and witness to our neighbors, and take a stand for Jesus, when our faith is only weak and never grows?

Friends, Jesus, in His grace, welcomes those with weak and fledging faith, but He doesn't want us to stay there. He wants to grow our faith.

Friends, what's the condition of your faith like this morning? Have you surrendered faith to fear? No doubt, many of us here are facing all sorts of storms on our own.

Jesus never turns us away, because our faith is weak. He never dismisses us. He never says, come back to me when you've got your life together. Jesus welcomes weak and faith disciples, but He doesn't want us to stay there.

[ 26 : 12 ] Jesus looks at these disciples, and He says, why are you so afraid? And the answer is because they still come into grips with who He is, because their faith is a fledgling faith. Yet His call is not so much a rebuke, as an invitation to discover Him for who He is.

Who is this man? Jesus is the Lord of all creation, the one who has authority all over all creation. And therefore, He calls us to live by faith and not by fear.

But that's not all Matthew wants us to see, because look at the second pericope here. And the second one, we see Jesus has authority over all evil, even over demonic forces.

Jesus and His disciples, after the storm has been stilled, they reach the other side of the lake, and they disembark. They get to this region called the area of the Gadarenes. And there they encounter two men that are demon-possessed.

Now, it's important to note that the New Testament differentiates between demon possession and demon oppression. To be possessed by something means it has a controlling influence of you.

[ 27 : 15 ] It is in control of your life. To be oppressed by something means it challenges you, it buffets you, it causes difficulty. The Bible says that Christians are never possessed by demons.

We are possessed by the Holy Spirit. But Christians are certainly oppressed by demonic forces. We have an enemy called Satan. The Bible tells us Satan's job, his goal is to rob, steal, and destroy.

If you're a follower of Jesus this morning, you have an enemy called Satan that is going to buffet you and cause problems. He's going to try and attack you and distract you, take your eyes off of Jesus. But Christians are not possessed by evil spirits.

We are possessed by the Holy Spirit. Here Jesus comes across two men that are demon possessed. They are under the spiritual control of demonic forces.

But notice what happens when they encounter Jesus. Look at verse 29 here. They say, What have you to do with us, O Son of God? They immediately recognize who Jesus is.

[ 28 : 17 ] Friends, to know who Jesus is, and yet refuse to bow down to Him, is the ultimate picture of all that is demonic and satanic. But look what happens here.

The demons know who Jesus is. And so they cry out, Have you come here to torment us before the time? Which means, Have you come to bring judgment on us before the appointed time?

The demons know that hell awaits them at the end, and then finally. But they are anticipating this free reign until that time.

But Jesus has gotten used to them. His arrival signals that Jesus has brought His kingdom. The first steps of His judgment is coming. And so the answer, in some small way, is yes, Jesus has come to bring His judgment on all that is evil and wrong with the world.

That's exactly what He does. And so with one word, these demons end up in the pigs. Remember, in ancient Jewish culture, pigs is the ultimate picture of all that is unclean and immoral and ungodly.

[ 29 : 22 ] And so the demons say, If you're going to cast us out, at least let us go into the pigs. And it seems like Jesus is mercifully agreeing, but actually it's His form of judgment. It's a prototype of judgment.

And Jesus says, Yes, go into the pigs. And notice what happens. The pigs don't just carry on life as normal. They don't go about their business grazing and lying in the mud. The pigs automatically stampede down the cliff, off the cliff and into the sea, the very sea that just try to swallow Jesus and the disciples.

They are consumed into the depths. Jesus is showing us that as the Son of God, even the demons are subject to Him. That He has authority to judge all that is evil in the world.

In some ways, it's a prototype of what's to come. Martin Luther, 500 years ago, wrote this amazing hymn. And I want to show you these words.

The English is a little bit old, so excuse that. But it's a beautiful hymn. There's a modern version of it, which maybe we can sing sometime. He says, He's talking about how as Christians, there's this enemy Satan that is buffering us.

[ 30 : 57 ] He rages. He threatens us. But we don't need to be afraid of Him. His doom is sure. One little word from Christ the King shall fail Him, shall undo Him.

If you've got your Bible in front of you, what's fascinating, in this entire second story, Jesus only says one word. Look at it in verse 32.

Jesus just says, Go. One little word, and these demons are cast out and end up in the depths of the sea. Here is a picture, a prototype of the judgment to come for all who refuse Him.



In Revelation 20, at the end of the ages, Satan and his host of angels will not merely be allowed to run and drown in the sea, but will be cast for all eternally into a sea of ever-burning fire.

They'll be tormented there day and night forever and ever and ever and ever. It's a sign of what's going to come.

[ 32 : 04 ] And in the first pericope, we see that God can, not only can God rule over all creation, Jesus as God's Son does that as well. In this story, we see not only does God ultimately judge all that's evil, Jesus as God's Son does that too.

And fascinatingly, the people come out, or the herdsmen, they run off to the town and they go and call the villagers and say, see what's happened to your pigs.

And the townsfolk run back to Jesus and they're told what's happened to the demon-possessed men. And Mark's gospel tells us that they see these two men sitting in their right mind at Jesus' feet, completely healed and set free.

But look at what Matthew's gospel tells us. Verse 34, Behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

It's interesting that Jesus, Matthew uses the same word here for how the townsfolk respond to Jesus as the way that the demons respond to Jesus a little earlier. In verse 33, both of them beg Jesus.

[ 33 : 13 ] Although they knew his power, they begged him to leave. And it's not the main point of the passage, but here we see a picture of a corrupted heart. These townsfolk act devilish themselves.

Just like the demons, they begged Jesus. This time they begged him to leave. These townsfolk care more about their pigs than they do about people, more about their money than the well-being of these two men.

And what's worse of all is that they had Jesus, the Son of God, in their midst, the one who with the word can still the storms, the one who with the word can bring freedom and healing and resolution, the one who can set people free.

And they beg him to leave. Friends, what sort of man is this? He is Jesus, the Son of God, the one who has authority over all that is evil and wrong with this world, the one who has authority to cast out Satan.

But that's still not Matthew's main point here, because Matthew's building towards something. And so look at the final pericope with me. In the final story today, we're not going to look at it in great detail because we're going to come back to it next week.

[ 34 : 20 ] But we see that Jesus has authority not only over all creation, not only over all that evil and unjust of the world, but Jesus has authority to forgive sin.

Amazingly, Jesus obliges the request of these Gadarene people. And he leaves their town and he gets back on the boat and he crosses over to Capernaum. And some people bring him a paralytic.

Mark and Luke tell us it's four friends. And they bring this paralytic to Jesus. And Jesus knows exactly what they're asking him to do. They want Jesus to heal him.

But that's not what Jesus does. Not at first, in any way. Jesus says something completely different. He changes the subject. He says, Take heart, my son. Your sins are forgiven.

Amazingly, Jesus sees their faith, their courageous confidence in him, and he declares on the basis of this faith, this man's sins are forgiven. But of course, that prompts the Pharisees to throw their hands in the air and to froth at the mouth and say, Who do you think you are?

[ 35 : 27 ] That's blasphemy. You can't say that. And so look at what Jesus says. He says, Which is easier to say? Your sins are forgiven? Or to say, Get up and walk?

I've often wondered about that question. What does Jesus mean by that? Well, I guess what he's saying, Which is easier to do? To say, Your sins are forgiven?

For which there's no kind of empirical verification. How do you know whether that's true or not? Or to say, Pick up your mat, get up and walk, and go home. For which there'd be an immediate kind of empirical verification if Jesus had any authority to say that.

If you're going to go around saying pretty amazing things, much easier to say, Hey, your sins are forgiven, than, Hey, paralytic, pick up your mat and walk. Which is easier to say, Well, your sins are forgiven.

But which is easier to do? That's another question. Throughout Matthew 8, we've seen Jesus do amazing things. And many times, with just one word or one phrase, He says to a leper, Be clean.

[ 36 : 39 ] He says to a centurion, It is done. He says to the storms, Peace. He says to demon-possessed men, Be healed. He says to the demons, Go.

With almost one word, one phrase, Jesus encompasses these incredible things. But to forgive sins, that's going to require something altogether different.

For Jesus to say, Your sins are forgiven, is going to require more than just words. It's going to require Him going to the cross. As our substitute, in our place, for Jesus to be separated from the Father, for Jesus Christ to take the sins of you and me upon Himself and to receive the judgment and the condemnation and the torment and the wrath of God.

For Jesus to go to the very depths of hell Himself as He takes our sin upon Himself. For Jesus to say to you and I, Your sins are forgiven.

When Mary, Jesus' mother, was told by the angel Gabriel that she was pregnant with child and she was going to bear Jesus, this Messiah, the angel Gabriel says to her, You shall call His name Jesus.

[ 37 : 59 ] Jesus is the Aramaic version of Joshua, which means God saves. You shall name His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

The salvation from sins that happens is not when Jesus stretches out His arms to steal the sea, but when Jesus stretches them out on the cross to die for me and for you.

Friends, this is why Jesus came. This is the authority that Jesus really possesses. In the first pericope, we see Jesus as authority over all creation.

In the second pericope, we see Jesus even as authority over the demons and over demonic and evil forces. But look what He says here in verse 5 and 6. Jesus says, which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven or to say, rise up and walk.

But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He says to the man, rise, pick up your mat and go.

[ 39 : 03 ] Friends, this is the climax of the passage because this is the climax of the entire Bible. No doubt many of us are facing storms this morning and Christ in His grace and His compassion wants to be with us in the storms.

But friends, can I say to you, that's not your biggest problem. Friends, many of us here are buffeted and oppressed by demonic forces. Some of us maybe are not Christians and are even under the control of demonic forces.

Maybe you've done some ridiculous thing. You've played some demonic games. You've offered incense to idols and invited Satan to come and torment you and to have havoc in your life.

Friends, can I say, that is not your ultimate problem, as serious as that is. The greatest problem that every human being faces is the problem of sin. That we have a charge over us which says, we have rebelled against God and we are under His judgment.

But Jesus came, this is the good news of the gospel, Jesus came to die on the cross to take your sins and my sins upon Himself to hang it that He might say to each one of us to look us in the eye and say, friend, your sin can be forgiven.

[ 40 : 08 ] Jesus comes to all who will come to Him in faith and repentance and say, not guilty, your sin has forgiven you. Amazing.

This is the climax of the Bible. This is the good news of the gospel. In Luke chapter 10, Jesus sends His disciples out to go do all sorts of amazing things.

They come back and this is what they say. They say, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name. We say these things, we pray, we cast out demons and they listen to us. It's amazing.

I don't know how many of you have cast out demons. I've never done that. The disciples do this and they think it's amazing. This is incredible. Jesus says, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Behold, I've given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, to have power over the enemy. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this. Don't find your hope in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice in this, that your name is written in heaven.

[ 41 : 12 ] Friends, this is the ultimate hope of the gospel. That though our sins are red like scarlet, Jesus will wash them white as snow. Friends, Jesus comes and offers us forgiveness of sins.

How will we respond? Friends, will we come to Jesus with fledgling faith? Lord, I believe, but help my unbelief. Will we, like the Gadarenes, ask him to leave?

Will we say, that's offensive to me, how dare you call me a sinner? Will we beg him to leave and take his message to someone else? Friends, amazingly, Jesus doesn't impose his will upon us.

Jesus offers us the opportunity to receive his grace, but he doesn't impose it upon us. In a way, he's warning us of what's to come, but he offers us amnesty.

He offers us his grace. Friends, how will we respond this morning? Friends, many of us are drowning in sin right now, even as we speak. We must do what the disciples did.

[ 42 : 19 ] We must come to Jesus and say, Lord, save us, we are drowning. Jesus is gracious and compassionate, even to those with fragile and fledgling faith, even to those with weak faith.

Come to him, even weak faith is faith still. Friends, some of us think of ourselves as Christians, but really, we've never come to Jesus. We are slaves to our sin and we can't, friends, I've got to tell you, you cannot save yourself.

You cannot do enough, you cannot serve enough, you cannot earn enough to merit or earn your salvation. One of the things that Jesus wants to tell us is we are all, all of us, like the disciples, are in a storm and there is nothing we can do to save ourselves from the storm that's coming.

Friends, you cannot save yourself. You can only cast yourself at the mercy of Jesus. We have to do what the disciples did. We have to come to him. Friends, many are drowning, but we refuse to come to him.

We ask him to leave. Jesus is here. He's here to save. He's here to forgive when we come to him today. Friends, some of us are Christians, but maybe we've wandered so far. We've drifted so far gone and we don't even know will Jesus accept us again.

[ 43 : 33 ] Friends, the good news of the gospel is Jesus is compassionate and gracious. If only we will come to him. If we'll come to him in simple faith. Weak faith still, but faith.

If we'll come to him in repentance. If we'll come to him in sincerity. Friends, we're going to take communion in a few minutes' time. Dan is going to lead us in communion. And I want to ask us to come in sincerity.

Don't come dishonestly. Don't just come and go through the motions. Let's come to King Jesus, the one we sang about this morning. Come to him in surrender. Come to him in repentance. But let's come to him now.

Jesus is the one who has authority over all of creation. Jesus is the one who has authority over demons and evil. Jesus who has authority to forgive us of our sins and to welcome us into our family.

Jesus who has authority to offer compassion and mercy to sinners like you and me. Let's come to him now.