

The Apostles' Creed (Part 3) – And in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord

Matt Chandler – September 6, 2015

[Video]

Male: I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth...

Female: And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord...

Male: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary...

Male: Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

Male: He descended to hell.

Female: The third day he rose again from the dead.

Male: He ascended to heaven...

Female: And sits on the right hand of the Father almighty...

Female: From whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

Male: I believe in the Holy Spirit...

Female: The holy catholic church...

Male: The communion of saints...

Male: The forgiveness of sins...

Male: The resurrection of the body...

Male: And the life everlasting.

Male: Amen.

[End of video]

Hey, how are we? Doing well? Excellent. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab those. Matthew 16 is where we're going to camp out. We'll be in verses 13-16, although we'll spend the bulk of our time in verse 16. If you don't have a Bible with you, there's a hardback black one somewhere around you. I want to encourage you to grab that.

If you're not a Christian, maybe new to church, don't quite know how that works, we have the page number behind us, and then when we say, "Matthew 16, starting in verse 13..." *Sixteen* is the big number, the chapter number, and then *13* is the verse number, the small number. If you want to turn there, it's really important that I'm not just talking about what I think today but we're rooted in the Word of God.

This is week 3 of our series through the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed is the oldest of Christian creeds. In fact, it has been used by the church for over 1,000 years, and it has been used really for two purposes. First to correct error, and secondly to form the people of God, to help the people of God form correct symmetry, to correct and give clarity, to help inform how we think about the community, and ultimately to lead how we counsel ourselves and counsel others.

It's important to note, as always, that we're not preaching the creed; we're preaching the Bible. The creed doesn't have any authority unto itself except what it teaches us about what the Word of God says. It's always important to know that I'm not preaching the creed; I'm preaching the Bible, as we'll see momentarily.

I always want to invite you, if I ever stop preaching the Bible, to find a church that does preach the Bible. So if I start going a little weird or something, start talking about stuff that's out of step with God as he has revealed himself to us in his Holy Word, find a church that's more serious about the Bible than we have grown. I just want to encourage you in that direction.

Now one of the things we've done over the last few weeks is as we get to the creed, we've stood together and recited it together. I've enjoyed that. I don't know if you have. It's a cool moment, because the church historically has done that regardless of denomination. Christian people are creedal people. We are people who look to the Word of God, and men and women in history have built out systems around the Word of God that are meant to help us.

When the people of God have stood and quoted the Apostles' Creed throughout Christian history, they've done two things simultaneously. When we stand and recite the creed, we are rejecting popular narratives of the day. We are being fully rebellious while simultaneously pledging allegiance to. When we recite the creed, what we're saying is that we would reject the narratives of our day for how life works, for the meaning of life, for what's going to give us full life.

When we stand and recite the creed, what we're saying is, "I reject materialism. I reject that more stuff is going to make me happy. I reject progressivism. I reject the idea that mankind is always getting better. I fundamentally reject that, and simultaneously, while I'm rejecting that, I'm pledging allegiance to the triune God of the Bible. I'm pledging allegiance to this three-in-one, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, three distinct persons yet one God in the Godhead."

That's what Christians have done since the beginning. We've rebelled against popular narratives, and we've embraced the true narrative found in the Word of God. With that said, we're going to read the Apostles' Creed together. Will you stand with me? If you're not a Christian and this wigs you out a little bit, feel free to stay seated or just stand with us, stand among us, but we're going to read this together.

As we've already covered, it's important to note that the creed starts "I believe" and not "I know." There are two ways to know things. You can know it in your mind, and that's called *understanding*, and you can know it in your heart, and that's called *belief*. The Bible calls us to both, both an understanding of the mind and belief in the heart. Let's read this together.

"I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the

communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting, amen."

We started with, "I believe," that there's a difference between knowing in your head and knowing in your heart. You can know things in your head and not act upon them, but if you believe, you'll act upon them. We went through a series of things that we know but don't do, and yet to believe is actually to be moved to action.

Last week we talked about "God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth." We said that our God is an infinitely powerful, intensely personal Father. As we consider the triune nature of our God, it leads us to the second person of the Trinity. We'll spend our time today in Matthew 16 considering the fact that "Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord" is the next part of the creed.

What we're seeing here is three titles given to Jesus, that he is the Christ, the only Son, and our Lord. You have three titles given to Jesus, and you'll see those fire up pretty quickly in Matthew 16. So let's look together at the Word of God. Matthew 16, starting in verse 13.

"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'"

Verse 16 is where we're going to camp out. We'll go back up to verse 13 for a little bit, but verse 16 is really where the meat of this text is. Verse 16 says, **"Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ...'"** By the way, articles matter. You can circle *the*. **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** We see two of our three titles right here in this text.

The setting is right outside of Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asked the disciples, "Hey, what's the word on the street? Who do people say I am? When you're out in the marketplace, who do people think I am? What do they think is going on here?" Word on the street was that Jesus was some sort of reincarnated prophet, because what all of those brothers on this list have in common is they're dead. John the Baptist...beheaded. These are all hitters, but they're all dead.

"You're some sort of reincarnated prophet is the word on the street." Then Jesus flips it. "What about *you*?" It's a question you and I will have to answer even today. "Who do *you* say that I am?"

Peter, who is not a shy man, is quick to answer. "You are the Christ, the only Son of God." Here's something interesting to note about what's happening in this declaration. The location is huge.

Here's why. This conversation is taking place right outside of Caesarea Philippi. Caesarea Philippi was actually renamed Caesarea Philippi by Augustus Caesar. He renamed it after himself, and then Herod the Great actually built a temple there to Caesar. So Caesarea Philippi was one of the crown jewels of the Roman Empire as a way to kind of flex its might.

Now one of the things that's happening when he says, "You are the Christ" is when the Old Testament was translated out of Hebrew and into Greek, which was the dominant language of the first-century world, this word *Christos* was translated or applied to kings 20-something times in the Old Testament. Anointed kings were called *christos*. So when Peter says, "You are the Christ," Peter is making the declaration, "Yes, you're the Messiah, but you are the King."

He's calling Jesus the King in the shadow of the crown jewel of the Roman Empire outside of Rome. The declaration being made is, "Jesus, you are the King, and you're king over all earthly powers." Rome rules the world at this period of time. In fact, they rule from India to England. With no air force, if a rebellion fires up, it's going to take you two years to get there. This is Rome, a brutal, violent, ruthless regime. In the shadow of their might, Peter says, "You're the King, *the* King."

The declaration we see happening here is that Jesus is King over all earthly powers, but that's not the only thing we can see here via this location. Before it was renamed Caesarea Philippi by Caesar, it was called Paneas, because the god Pan had a temple there and was worshiped there. This idea of Paneas, where we get *pantheism*...

If you don't know what pantheism is, how many of you saw *Avatar*? You can admit it. It's a safe place. I know it's rated R. You're going to be fine. No church discipline because you saw *Avatar*. That's pantheism. If you haven't seen it, everything is god and god is in everything. They get their ponytail and hook it to a lizard and then hook it to a tree. That's pantheism, that god is in everything and everything is god.

Pan had a temple there. There was also a massive temple to Baal there. So in this singular declaration that Jesus is *the* Christ...not *a* christ but *the* Christ...Peter is saying, "You are King over every earthly power, but you are also King over every *heavenly* power. There is no domain that

exists that you do not stand over as its King." That's the declaration happening in this text, that Jesus is the King of everything. There is nothing he does not rule and reign over that exists.

Now from there, he moves into "Jesus is the only unique Son of God." It's important to note that if you read your Bible, there's a lot said in the Old Testament... Prophets and righteous men were oftentimes called sons of God, so this little phrase *son of God* isn't unique to Jesus except within the context of the text and the teachings of Christ about himself and the testimonies about Christ that are written by others in the Word of God.

Although there were other men who were given the title "Son of God," none of them were given the definitive article, "*The* Son of God." Jesus is unique in three ways when it comes to these prophets and other men. Let me give them to you really quickly. Jesus is unique in his sonship to the Father in that he is co-eternal with God the Father. Jesus has always been, and he will always be. Jesus is co-eternal with the Father. He has always been.

You know this if you've read the gospel of John. The gospel of John starts with, "In the beginning was the Word. In the beginning was Jesus. Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God." Jesus was before all things. He is co-eternal with the Father. That is not true about the prophets. Jesus walks in a distinct authority. If you watch Jesus operate, he doesn't operate like one of the prophets or some teacher. He operates in an extreme amount of authority. He rebuked a storm and it listened.

Jesus doesn't tend to get in a lot of arguments. Think about that. When you read the gospel, he just doesn't argue a lot. "Why would you think that?" "Think what?" "You know what you were thinking." He just doesn't argue a lot. "Wake up, Jesus. We're going to die." "You're not going to die. Stop it, storm!" There wasn't one more clap of thunder, like the storm trying to get one jab in before it stopped. It just stopped, and everything went quiet.

One of my favorites is when he told Lazarus he couldn't be dead anymore. That's just awesome. "Lazarus, come on." That power makes Jesus unbelievably unique. He doesn't argue with demons. In fact, it's funny to note that every time Jesus comes across a demonic, they're terrified. I mean, you have one case where the man falls on the ground and the demon speaks. "Have you come to destroy us before the appointed time?"

That doesn't sound like the movies that are rolling out right now about demons. They're like, "Oh no." They know, "He's going to destroy us one day," and they're like, "Hey man, you're early. You're

not supposed to be destroying us today. That's later." He walks in a distinct authority. Then Jesus is the unique Son of God in his proximity to the Father. He is co-eternal, he walks in divine authority, and he's a part of the Godhead, always has been, always will be part of the three-in-one, the second person of the Trinity.

Lastly, not only is Jesus the Christ, the King, he is also the only unique Son of God. The last title given to him in the Apostles' Creed is that he is the Lord. Now the phrase "Jesus is Lord" appears in the New Testament close to 300 times. It's one of the most common renderings given to Jesus, his ministry, his personhood, who he is, that Jesus is the Lord.

The reason that's so huge... Once again, when the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament, as you and I would know it) was translated into Greek, uniformly they translated the covenant word *Yahweh*, the name they gave God, to *Lord*. So you begin to see Jesus being called *Lord* in the New Testament as a reference to his deity, a reference to the salvific work of God in Christ. When Jesus is called *Lord*, he is called the Savior of the world.

Now if I could dial you into something that's pretty profound here... You have a king who is absolute in power. If you want to just feel the weight of the power of Jesus, what could you do to stop him? Is there anybody you could call if you think he's being mean to you? Look at me. I love you, but you have nothing. Are cops going to arrest Jesus?

If we could understand how weak and impossible our situation is, we would grow in reverence for the kingship of Jesus Christ. Yet in his kingly domain, in his reign, in his rule, which extends over everything, he uses that authority to save, to rescue, to woo. He is a tender king. He is not a tyrant. In fact, the very nature of God being triune shows us that the universe exploded out of mutual love and happiness in the Godhead.

It wasn't a struggle of power, good versus evil, that created the universe like so many other religions believe. No, it was out of an overflow of God's perfections within the Godhead that everything that exists exists. This King Jesus is no tyrant. He's the Savior of the world. Now what we said is that we were going to walk through the Apostles' Creed because it would help us develop better symmetry and better clarity and would help us understand our community more and ultimately would help us counsel ourselves and counsel others.

With this in view, that Christ is the King over all earthly powers and all heavenly powers, that he is the only unique Son of God, different in his sonship than, say, you and me as adopted sons and daughters if you're a Christian in here, and he is the Savior of the world... With those things established, let's walk through the grid of *symmetry*, *clarity*, *community*, and *counsel*.

When we're talking about *symmetry*... Here's my experience in 20 years of pastoral ministry. There are some of you in here who fully would go, "Christ is Savior. I totally get that. He's Savior." But there's no part of you that would call him King or submit to his kingly reign. So there's this weird thing that happens.

I'm not talking about immature Christians or baby Christians. In fact, I think The Village Church, by the grace of God, should always look a bit immature because so many of you are new believers. We're never going to be exactly where maybe some of you with church backgrounds think we should be, because there are so many babies here, and babies are messy. Good lord, toddlers are messy. Shoot, teenagers are messy.

So if that parallels with our spiritual natures, then there are some infants in here, and we don't want to beat up infants. You don't want to put a ton of weight on a toddler. I don't demand out of a 3-year-old what I would expect out of a 22-year-old, but there *is* a strange sense in which many of us feel that Jesus can be our Savior with no submission to him being King, and this is a foreign concept in the Bible.

I always thought the Lord was going to take me back to the West Coast to pastor. I spent some time in the Bay Area and thought I was going to plant a church out there. I'm not unhappy that that's not how it played out. I love being here. I love Texas. We're full-on now. I have a truck and a horse and two dogs and a couple of rifles. I say, "Y'all" a lot. I mean, I'm in. But ultimately, as I look at the context there, where it's just so blatantly secular and pagan, there's an issue that needs to be addressed.

Here, one of the bigger issues is that so many of you don't see Jesus as King at all. You have fire insurance. You saw a scary sketch when you were 6 years old about how you were going to go to hell, or your mom and dad found *their* value in your baptism so they talked you into something that wasn't in your heart yet.

I'm not saying we're perfect in our obedience to the kingly reign of Christ. If I'm saying that, then I'm not a Christian. But I'm saying there's a desire or a desire to desire. You see? A desire even to desire. Something has to be there. "I'm going to submit to King Jesus." Even if that's in its infant stages, it must be there or you're not a Christian. Some of you need, for symmetry's sake, to grow in your holy fear and awe of King Jesus, because as I already said, who could stay his hand?

"Lion of Judah" is correct. You're going to be a little nervous around a lion. How awesome would it be, though? It would be incredible. That's one of my favorite things. I'm looking forward to new heavens and new earth, and I just want to wrestle one of those mugs but not get eaten by one. Now they're majestic and awe-inspiring and they make you a little nervous. At the zoo... "Can he clear that right there? I don't think so." This is King Jesus, and I would be careful at taking King Jesus lightly.

Others of you, that's not your issue at all. In fact, your issue is the exact opposite of that. Remember, we're trying to develop the right symmetry here. You see him as King Jesus, but you're nervous about that kingly rule of Jesus, and you don't see him as the Lord, the Savior, the tender, loving King who ransoms and rescues, so you avoid or you've chalked him up as being a tyrant or cruel. You need to grow in your understanding that in his kingly reign he is a tender, loving sovereign.

Then on *clarity*... Everybody on earth and every religion does something with Jesus Christ. You cannot deny the historicity of the person of Jesus of Nazareth and what has happened since his death and resurrection. Let me walk you through some of that. Now we're talking about *clarity*. The Muslims believe in Jesus. In fact, Jesus is mentioned multiple times in the Qur'an. They call him 'Isa. They believe he is a prophet sent from God and one of God's best prophets, so Jesus is one of the greatest prophets God ever sent to mankind.

Jews or Judaism in general view Jesus as one of a number of false messianic claimants who have led a ton of people away from the true religion of Judaism. Hindus, or at least some Hindus, regard Jesus as the incarnation of the god Vishnu. According to Hindu belief, Vishnu is periodically incarnated into the world in forms as varied as a fish or a dwarf or a human being, and Vishnu comes into the world in order to preserve or sustain life or restore order on the earth.

Atheists or agnostics usually believe he was a good teacher or an example to emulate. Unbelievers see Jesus as a historic person who is irrelevant for life and is only a historical figure. Most unbelievers are not hostile toward Jesus Christ. They just think about him like they think about

George Washington. "Yeah, he did some good stuff. He's really irrelevant for my life today. I mean, I'm really grateful for him. That whole cherry tree thing is legit, but I don't know what bearing that has on my life today."

Despite all the kind of outrage you're seeing, most unbelievers are not hostile toward Jesus Christ. They just look at him like George Washington or something. He's irrelevant. He just doesn't matter. Nominal Christians, and I don't like that phrase. I don't think you can do that. I think you can be immature. I think you can be a baby, but you can't be indifferent. You can't be nominal.

Nominal Christians see Jesus as a good add-on but not necessarily the King of their lives. Jesus is a type of genie in a bottle that gives us our wishes. He demands nothing, and when all is said and done, he's simply an errand boy who goes and grabs us other things to make us more comfortable. Here's something I need to note here. By the teachings, by the life, and by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all of this is categorically rejected by Jesus himself.

C.S. Lewis, who was a professor of medieval literature at Cambridge and Oxford (so what I'm trying to say is he was smarter than all of us), after reading the Bible as an expert in medieval literature, he said Jesus' claims make him either a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord. He has to be one of those. He's an outright liar (he has just made it all up, and he held on to that lie in an incredible amount of self-discipline as they butchered him), he's crazy, or he is who he says he is, and if he is who he says he is, we cannot be indifferent to that claim.

So as you hear people talk about Jesus... Everybody has an opinion about who he is, and yet it is the teachings of Christ and the life of Christ that make so many of those beliefs about who he is irrelevant, because he says, "That's not what I am. I'm not a good teacher. I'm not a good prophet. Before Abraham was, I Am. I am God in the flesh, second person of the Trinity. I have always been, I will always be." That's who Jesus said he was. He didn't say, "Live like me." He said, "Submit and surrender to me." That's different. This is the clarity we need around Jesus.

When it comes to the *community*... I love things that make Christianity really distinct from other belief systems. In almost all other world religions, the deity, whoever you want to make the deity, has been sinned against or there has been evil done toward that deity, and what you must do as men and women is offer penance or deliver an offering to this god to make things cool between the two of you. Christianity alone shows God himself putting on flesh and dwelling among men. God himself comes and makes peace with the rebellious.

So you don't see a Zeus-like god with a lightning bolt in his hand, waiting for you guys to mess up so he can blow you up. That's not what we see. That is not the message of Christianity. Again, I keep pushing you to John 3:17. John 3:16 is awesome, but it's 3:17 that says, "Christ has not come into the world to condemn the world but rather to save the world from condemnation." Christianity alone is an incarnational religion.

Because Christ put on flesh and dwelt among us, because the second person of the triune God of the universe entered the fray, we are men and women, as Christians, who enter the fray. Where the world is broken, with openhanded gladness... What I mean by that is openhanded gladness about my money, my time, my resources, my talent, my home. In openhanded gladness, I'm pushing back what's dark in the world. I am incarnating the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ by pushing back what's dark in the world.

This is what has defined our faith since the beginning. That's why so many hospitals are Presbyterian and Baptist and "Saint Such-and-Such," because Christians incarnate. We do not build walls to keep the sinners out. That's not what we do. That's not who we are. We push back what's dark. We are engaged. Christianity is not defined by its ivory-towered cleanliness but rather by its brokenhearted dirty-handedness.

We grieve at the brokenness of the world, but we don't grieve at the brokenness of the world behind high walls with machine gun turrets just to make sure none of it touches our family. We get in the muck and mire, and we weep with people and open up our homes and take dumb risks for the glory of God. This defines the community of God. We're incarnational. We are a missional people. The world is broken, and we have good news. We herald that good news with our mouths and with our lives. The people of God should be defined by such things.

Now brothers and sisters, one of the drifts I've constantly tried to lay before us as we consider The Village Church... In this area, the drift is going to be toward becoming a prettier and prettier and prettier people. God save us from that. Might there always be a lot of babies and a lot of toddlers making a lot of mess, and might we grow in our openhanded generosity to plant churches, to push back the darkness, to send missionaries to the ends of the earth, to support ministries to refugees here in the Dallas area. On and on and on I could go.

Might we with our lives enter the fray. That's one of the markers of the community of faith seen clearly in the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity, Jesus the Christ, the unique Son of God, our Lord. Now when it comes to *counsel*... I think of all of the weeks we'll have, the counsel is the easier one to see.

If you have a king who reigns and rules over all, and as we'll read here in a second out of Colossians, chapter 1, doesn't just rule and reign over all but, on top of that, is the creator of all things... He designed things to work a specific way for your joy and for the glory of God. Where should we go to find counsel? Our King. We should go to Jesus. We should go to the very words of God to find counsel.

Again, on the loveliness and tenderness of this King... Jesus teaches, "The thief comes to kill, to steal, and to destroy, but I have come that you might have life and have it to the full." That sounds awesome. What does Jesus come to do? To give you life to the full. Now who doesn't want that? I mean, which one of you is going, "Eh, you know what? I'll take three-quarters. I'm doing all right. I'll take half." No, no. I want more.

If there's more joy to be had in my marriage because of Christ, I want it. If there's more joy to be had in the ever-expanding knowledge of who he is, I want it. I want all the life there is to have, and not in some immature, ridiculous, "jump off a building with a winged bat suit on." No, I want all the life there is to have, and Christ said, "It's in me. You find it in me. You want full life? I've come to give you full life. Come to me for that full life." We find our counsel in King Jesus, and we counsel others out of the wisdom that *is* Christ Jesus.

Now as I thought through how we might encourage one another today... There is a passage of Scripture found in the book of Colossians, Colossians 1:15-20, that some historians and theologians will call the "Christ hymn." They believe that maybe the early church would stand and read this together, maybe even sing this together as a song. So what I thought we would do, just to honor the Lord and encourage one another in this place today, is stand and read Colossians 1:15-20 together.

Here's what we're going to do. I want to start us, and then I want to back out and just let your voices fill the room as we testify to the beauty of Christ. So whether you're in Fort Worth or Plano or Dallas... By the way, happy birthday, Plano. One year old today, running close to 2,000. That's crazy. I don't know if there's cake there or whatever, but God bless you as you guys have faithfully loved and served the Lord in Plano.

What we're going to do is across all of our campuses we're just going to stand now. So go ahead and stand, if you will. Again, if you're not a Christian and this wigs you out a little bit, feel free to stay seated or stand up to blend in. It's up to you. I'm going to start us on this reading of Colossians 1:15-20, and then I'm going to bow out pretty quickly, and I want you to grow stronger as you read, not weaker when I bow out.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

Amen. May God bless the reading of his Word. I want to end our time together, at least my time with you together, by simply making an appeal. Here's my appeal. Some of you who are here today were invited by a friend or you just stumbled in here or just randomly woke up and thought, "I need to go to church." Something has happened in your life or something. I don't know.

Some of you are in desperate need of a king, and here's what I mean by this. You have tried to be king of your life. You have tried to rule and reign and do what you think is right. Hear me. I love you, but you have made a mess of things. There's stuff in shambles all around you. Maybe it's relationships you're in. Maybe it's at work. You have tried to reign. You have tried to rule with a good heart. You've tried to do those things, and your world has fallen apart.

I'm not trying to disrespect you in any way. There's just a better king than you. The offer on the table for you today is a king who has come that you might have life and have it to the full. I promise you not a life of ease. I would never lie to you like that. I'm not promising you a life where everything magically gets fixed overnight because you submit to King Jesus. That would be a lie. I'm telling you that what you were designed to walk in can be yours: reconciliation with your Creator.

Some of you have tried to be king, and it has gone badly. The offer on the table by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is there's a better King. You need only bow and submit to him. Then there are others of you... You're your own king, and it seems to be working out just fine. Here's what's interesting to note. I don't think this is unique to this area, but I hear it a lot around here.

You consider yourself a good person. Like if God is anything, he should be upset with some people you know, not you, because you're great. When I hear people say that (in fact, I heard it this past week), I almost always ask a gentle follow-up question. "Okay, by what standard are you judging your goodness?" It's always crickets or a mention of other people they know who are worse than they are.

Listen. I love you. It's the wrong standard. You're judging your goodness by the wrong standard. In fact, if I could just play an Old Testament game with you really quickly... Let's just test your goodness quickly. You're a good person, but you lie. You're not a liar; you just lie sometimes. You couldn't be defined as a liar. You just lie.

Do you covet? Maybe I could do this. Do you find your heart rejoicing when bad things happen to people you think bad things should happen to? Do you find your heart angry and frustrated when good things happen to people you don't think good things should happen to? That's coveting. You're making an accusation against God that he has not been good to you, that he has not provided for you.

What about lust? How are you doing on lust? "Well, I haven't acted out on it." Well, apparently the Bible believes that if it's in your heart, you're guilty. God is not after just shaped actions but a new heart. But you're good, right? I mean, you're a coveting liar with lust, but you're awesome. What about anger and rage? Any anger and rage? Any explosive frustration and lack of patience?

I'm not dogging you. I mean, you're great. I'm just saying at this point you're a coveting, lying, lust-filled, angry person. But you know what? Next to your neighbor Bill you're probably crushing it. No, no. The Ten Commandments exist to show you that you're not good. They're not a list of things you had better do but rather a type of MRI to show you you're sick.

In your pride, some of you are going to try to stay on the throne. You don't need God. You have you. His tender patience will not always be there. There will come a day where Christ (we're going to get

to this later on in the creed) returns to judge the living and the dead, and on that day your notion of an indifferent king toward your rebellion will evaporate.

The Bible says that on that day men will try to run and hide in the mountains, and the mountains will flee before the coming of the Lord. Like how scary is King Jesus that the mountains duck? Have you been to the mountains? I was raised a little bit outside of Seattle. You could always see the mountain there in the distance. I'm just trying to get my head around Rainier going, "Oh, get down!" I mean, this massive thing in the distance going, "Here he comes! Run!"

Some of you in your pride and arrogance have exalted your own loveliness to a place that's blasphemous. I am simply trying to make the appeal that you end this rebellion that will lead to your eternal destruction and submit to the gracious King who has come into the world not to condemn you but rather to save you from condemnation. Some of you need a king. Others of you need a savior. One of my favorite parts of The Village Church is the crazy stories.

Some of you have walked in with such guilt and shame and such feelings of unworthiness and dirtiness. You just feel you've sinned too much. You've gone too far, whether that be sexual perversion or drugs and alcohol. Your whole life behind you is nothing but carnage. So you would hear something about the love of Christ and the tenderness of King Jesus, and you would think, "Not for me. There's no way he would love me."

Maybe you even come in here halfway hungover from last night. "There's no way this could be true for me, if Jesus knew about what's going on in my marriage, what happens in my home, what's going on that nobody else knows about." You would walk in a type of shame that would have you believing that this good news isn't for you.

Again, one of the reasons I love the Bible is the Bible is filled with guys who are kind of outdoing you here. If you want to look at the stunning grace of God... In the book of Acts, King David is called a man after God's own heart, but if you start looking back at his life, King David slept with one of his friend's wives and then had his friend murdered. That's a strange "man after God's own heart" title, isn't it? I can think of a couple of other nicknames David probably should have had, but man after God's own heart? How is that possible?

It's possible because the atoning work of Jesus Christ, our Lord, the unique Son of God on the cross was so total in its forgiving, mercy-extending properties that for those who believe upon his name,

all sin, past, present, and future, was fully absorbed, fully accounted for, in the cross of Christ. So King David, despite his depravity and wickedness... I believe he has outdone you here. You're walking in with a heroin problem. I'm asking, "Okay, but have you slept with your best friend's wife and then had him murdered?"

You're in second place, and David is called a man after God's own heart. Or we could do Saul of Tarsus or... Pick somebody. Noah? Moses? Who do you want to talk about? You read these things you heard about growing up in Sunday school, and they're kind of these pretty children's stories. The Bible is grimy. It's a grimy book, where God just continually saves the most deplorable, despicable people. He brings from the fringes his brightest lights.

Friend, I don't care what you're caught up in. It doesn't have more power than the saving work of Jesus on the cross. Gosh, if you had any idea who you were sitting around... Go to Recovery on a Wednesday night around here. You'll be like, "Dear Lord," and you'll start clutching your purse and making sure you lock your car. May we always be that way. King Jesus, Savior of the world.

Here in a little bit you're going to have an opportunity to be prayed for, to be prayed over, to be encouraged in your desire to or your desire to submit your life to this tender, ferocious King. May we with growing conviction say, "I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord." Next week, we'll round out the Trinity with the Holy Spirit. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for your goodness and grace. Father, many of us just cry out to you this morning. We need a king. We've tried to rule and reign, and it has gone really badly for us. There's brokenness all around us. As we've tried to fix it, it has just gotten more messy. I pray, Holy Spirit, that you would provide illumination, that you would do the work of clarity, and that we might lay our yes down to you, King Jesus, that we might step off this throne of our lives and our hearts and just say, "I need you to reign and rule over me, Jesus. I need you to sit on this throne."

Some of us need to think on, dwell on, Jesus as Savior and let his forgiveness wash over the dirtiness we feel, the guilt and shame we're walking in, that we might leave this place different than we've come in because of this good news, because of this gospel. We thank you, Father, for sending the Son. We thank you, Holy Spirit, for opening our eyes to the beauty of the Son and bring glory to you, our Father, our infinitely powerful and intensely personal Father. Help us now as we consider and

think about you, Jesus, as we consider and think about your broken body and shed blood. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

We end all of our services here at The Village Church with the Lord's Supper. Here's one of the ways we think upon and marvel at Jesus Christ. We provide Communion primarily for our members, but if you're a guest with us today who's a believer in Christ, who is from a church that preaches the same gospel you've heard us preach today, we want to invite you to celebrate the Lord's Table with us. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, heirs of God, coheirs with Christ. It's a right and good thing for us to celebrate this.

I would also like to ask this. If you're not a Christian and you're here today, a friend has invited you or you've just come to church because you thought you should on Labor Day weekend, would you abstain? Will you let the elements pass? What we're celebrating here is true for all who have put their faith in Christ, but for those of you who aren't Christians, it's the tiniest cup of grape juice imaginable and an oyster cracker.

It's not going to make you lucky. It's not going to get you a promotion. It's not going to heal any of the issues you have in your life. It's what's behind all of this, what we're celebrating as Christians, that has all the weight. I don't want you to feel awkward. In fact, I've tried to speak to you directly multiple times just to make you feel safe and welcome in this place, but in this moment, will you just let these elements pass?

While they're handing this out, I want to give you a few minutes to consider the things that have been said. I'm going to sit down and give you a moment maybe to confess. Maybe there are areas of your life right now where you've tried to kick Jesus off the throne and reign and rule as your own king.

This is that moment, Christian, that we get to confess and marvel at the fact that King Jesus has not lost patience with us, that he has not lost any delight in us, that he is still for us and not against us, that all things are working together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purposes. That we might just in the next couple of moments marvel at the goodness of Christ. Then I'll come back up, and we'll take the Lord's Supper together as a family.

The words we were singing there are straight from the Word of God. It's a stunning thing that the invitation Jesus extends is the invitation most of us won't make to the people around us. "Are you

broken? Are you busted? Are you lonely? Are you hurting? Are you awkward? Are you in despair? Are you depressed? Are you overwhelmed? Come to me." That's incredible.

Will you do me a favor? Will you stand with me? Again, if you're not a Christian, didn't take the elements, you can just sit there or you can stand also. I'll completely leave it up to you. If you are a Christian, look around the room. This is us, the children of God, sons and daughters, not by our own will or by our own might, but by the Spirit of God. What a beautiful thing that despite us the Lord has called us unto himself.

The Bible tells us that on the night Jesus was arrested, he took the bread and broke it, and he said, "This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After the meal, he took the cup, and he called the cup the blood of the new covenant. What Jesus was doing in the blood of the new covenant was saying, "Hey, the altar is closed. I'm no longer taking any offering for sin. I will be *the* offering for all sin, past, present, and future, once and for all." He knew we were going to be prone to forget it, and he knew we were going to tend to try to work for our forgiveness, so he says, "As long as you gather, drink the cup in remembrance of me."

Father, I pray now that you'd do a good work in our hearts, that you'd provide that clarity, that you'd provide that symmetry, that you'd help us understand our community, and that you would enable us to counsel ourselves most fully. I pray for those in this room who don't know you, who are far from you. I pray that in this moment they would feel a tug on their hearts.

I pray that many who grew up in church would feel the tug to come home. They wouldn't be so hard on their mama and daddy's faith but rather would see the hypocrisy in their parents as an invitation for them in *their* hypocrisy to come and be loved by you. I pray for those who would call themselves their own kings. I pray that you would humble their hearts and heal their souls.

For those overwhelmed and burdened and beat up, Jesus, I pray you'd do a profound work and that they might for the first time in their lives surrender and feel released from the guilt and shame that's so heavy on them, the feeling of uncleanness that dominates their lives. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

Hey, listen. I love you. There are going to be some men and women up front. I want to make a last appeal. If you are in that place where you're like, "I want to know, I want to delight more than I do, I want to surrender," and you're not sure what to do, there will be some men and women up front

here to pray with you and encourage you. You're not going to say anything to us that shocks us or blows us out of the water or makes us panic. We are for you here to serve you.

We're going to sing this song together. We'll do a benediction, and then we'll be dismissed, but if you want to be prayed for, you want to hear more about Jesus, will you come up? There will be men and women here even now. I love being your pastor. Have a great day off tomorrow, if you get a day off. Blessings.

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