

How Precious Is Jesus

by Brian Long

This sermon emphasizes the preciousness of Christ, His blood, His promises, and the importance of making Him the center of our lives. It challenges believers to proclaim and worship Him wholeheartedly, surrendering all to experience His glory and love. The message highlights the value of Christ's sacrifice, the significance of His promises, and the call to genuine worship and obedience.

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:4, 1 Peter 1:18, 2 Peter 1:4, John 3:16, John 14:6, John 4:14, John 8:36, John 15:13, 1 John 5:3, Revelation 21:4

Topics: "The Preciousness of Christ", "Wholehearted Worship and Surrender"

Description

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Transcript

Glory be to God. Hallelujah. Boy, it is such a joy.

I tell you what, it's going to be hard to go home. Yeah, we might have to stay. Or take some of you with me.

I thought earlier, if I could take that dear sister back there, Lenora, and put her in my suitcase, I'd take her home. Her husband might not like it too much. Oh, no, no, no.

Oh, I'm so blessed by the testimonies. So full of life. So full of the Spirit of God.

God is doing a wonderful, wonderful work. And I know He started that long ago. And I just am privileged to be able to share in it here.

Glory be to God. We turn to 1 Peter tonight, chapter 2. 1 Peter, chapter 2. I have a question for you. I think I know the answer for many of you.

But we can still go deeper. The question tonight is, is Christ precious to you? Is Christ precious to you? And if you say yes, then I want to say to you, there's something about God being able to even enlarge our hearts even more. Where He becomes even more precious.

And we become even more of a worshiper. And our heart becomes even more ablaze with the fire of God, with the fire of love and devotion to Christ. So for some, right away you say, yes, He's precious.

Tonight I pray He becomes even more precious to you. And that the fire would burn even brighter. For those of you who say, I don't know Him that way.

I know Him as a religion, or I know about Him. I've heard what others say about Him. But I can't honestly say, to me He is precious.

May tonight you have an encounter with the living God. And you too will see that Christ is precious. Is He precious to you? 1 Peter, chapter 2. And we're going to start reading in verse 4. This is speaking, of course, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And He says, To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious.

And he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious. But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. Father, we ask Your holy blessing upon Your Word tonight and upon the preaching of Your Word. And our only desire, Lord, is to see You, is to have an encounter with You.

We're not interested in what man has to say. We're interested, Lord, in what You have to say by Your Spirit to each and every one of our hearts. So please speak to us again.

And Father, I ask You to enlarge our hearts and that You would set the... that You would find in us what You are seeking. Your Word says You're seeking for true worshippers, those who will worship You in spirit and in truth. And I'm asking You to take us deeper.

I'm asking You to let the fire burn brighter. I'm asking You to take us to higher ground and deeper places with You tonight, Lord Jesus, is my prayer. Our prayer together.

In Your holy name, Jesus. Amen. The Apostle Peter uses this word precious to describe the Lord Jesus at least three times in just these few verses that we read.

He used the word precious throughout both his letters. And in fact, he uses this word more than anybody else in the entire Bible. I wonder why that is.

It is because Jesus Christ truly was precious to this man. He was precious to the Apostle Peter. Is Christ precious to you? What does it mean for something to be precious? One dictionary defines precious as something of great value.

Great value. Not to be wasted. Not to be treated carelessly.

Or it can be a term used to address a beloved person. I even found myself during the testimonies saying over and over again, she's so precious. That's such a precious testimony.

When we heard Denise giving her testimony about little Jesse, did any of you have to wonder about whether or not that mama saw her child as precious? It's obvious. It comes through the tears. It comes across through the emotion.

The heart just radiates. My baby is precious. Precious to me.

So it's a word used to address a beloved person. A baby. A husband who loves his wife.

She is precious to me. A mother who loves her child. My child is precious to me.

It's something of great value. Something not to be treated carelessly. And while Christ was so very precious to the Apostle Peter, we have to remember, these are not just Peter's words.

All Scripture is God-breathed. Inspired by the living God. So who is it really here who is saying over and over again that Christ is precious? It's the Spirit of the Father speaking through the Apostle Peter as He is inspired to write.

So it says to me, Christ is precious to the Father. Christ is so precious to God. Jesus is precious to the Father.

He says that in verse 4. To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Remember when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist? And when He came up out of the water in the heavens part, and there's a voice that thunders from the heavens. This is My beloved Son.

Or this is My Son whom I love. With Him I am well pleased. It's God the Father saying, this is My Son and He is precious of immense value.

No one greater. No one dearer to the heart of the Father. This is My Son! My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Yet most of the religious men in that day despised and rejected Him as we saw this morning. Even spit upon Him. The crowd shouted, crucify Him! This One who God the Father says is precious.

My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Multitudes today hate even the mention of His blessed name. Rejected indeed by men, but most precious to God.

What makes something precious? One of the things that makes something precious is if it's rare. You find something that's rare, it makes that precious. You have what they call today precious gems or precious stones.

What is that? Little jewels that are so hard to find. They are rare. And they cost thousands of dollars.

Some of these tiny little rocks, jewels, diamonds. They're so precious to the world because they're so rare. How precious is that rain that finally comes for the farmer who has had no rain for months and months on end.

Every drop of rain is precious because it's rare. And folks, can I remind you there is only one, only begotten Son of God. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is only one Savior. There is only one King of Kings. There is only one Lord.

There is only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. There is only one way to heaven. Not many ways.

One way to heaven. And Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

How rare. Only one. Only one head of the church.

Only one cornerstone. You don't have three or four cornerstones. There aren't three or four heads.

There is one head to the body of Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ. One cornerstone, the chief cornerstone He speaks about here in verse 6. Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone. Elect.

Precious. Why is it precious? Because there is no other. There is none beside Him.

There is none like Christ. There is none who can compare. There is no other chief cornerstone.

And the chief cornerstone is the most important stone in the building. Every other stone has to line up with that stone. The other stones don't try to line up the chief cornerstone with them.

The chief cornerstone is the stone that all the other stones that make up the building have to line up with. There is only one. Only one.

Only begotten Son of God. Only one Savior. Is He precious to you? There will only be one judge at the judgment seat.

Only one inescapable judge of all humanity. The Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is precious to the Father.

He is precious to the church. He is precious, it says here in verse 7, to everyone who believes. This is what separates the true believers from non-believers.

This has helped me so much in dealing with somebody who is so persuaded that they were saved and born again and yet not bearing any fruit. I remember sharing with one man who was so convinced that he was saved and it was evident he was not saved. I said, how do you know you're saved? I know I'm saved because I walked down an aisle and I prayed a prayer and the preacher looked at me and told me I was saved.

And I said, did you know there are some tests in Scripture to see whether we're truly born again? Whether we've truly passed from darkness to light? From death to light? And here's one of them. Is Christ precious to you? Because the Bible says to those who believe, to you who believe, He is precious. And this man had to say honestly, I can't say that He is.

Never talk to Him. Never read His Word. Never come and worship Him together with the body of Christ.

This divides the true believers from the unbelievers. To you who truly believe, Christ is precious of immense value. There's no one like Him.

There's none beside Him. When it comes to the Apostle Peter, are these just empty words that he's uttering? How do we know Christ was precious to him? As our brother Mario reminded us of in the testimonies earlier, here's a man who was willing to leave his nets, to leave his boats, to forsake his business, to forsake all that he knew because he had met the pearl of greatest price. He met the One to whom nothing else compared.

And you see, when you have an encounter with Jesus, a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ, you're no longer going by just what somebody else said about Him, but now you've met Him. And you know He's not a dead religion, but a living God. And when you meet Him that way, you realize there's none who can compare.

And knowing Him is worth losing everything else. Knowing Him is worth forsaking all others. And that's what the Apostle Peter did, because he was precious.

Look at all of our brothers and sisters right now, in the past and also now, who are laying down their lives, and they're being martyred, and they're being tortured for Christ, and they're dying for the cause of Christ and the Gospel. Why? Because He is so precious to them. That's the only motive, brothers and sisters.

He's precious to them. Think of that old church father, Polycarp, that some of us have read about, old man who was led to the Roman Colosseum, threatened with hungry lions, 86 years old. Polycarp, deny Christ or you'll be ripped apart by the lions.

Old Polycarp said, 86 years have I known my Lord Jesus, and never once has He done me wrong. I will not deny Him now. To the lions He goes, and they rip Him apart.

Why? Why did he even lay down his life, forsake his own life? Because Christ is precious to him. I think of a story, maybe you've heard about that little 16 year old girl who was living in a communist country, and they were having a Bible study, and communist soldiers broke into the house, took the Bible, they said everyone, they had guns pointed at them, said we'll let you leave, but on one condition, you spit on this book of lies, and you deny Christ and you can go. And one by one, there was two or three of them that actually spit on the Bible, and were released.

And that 16 year old girl, with tears running down her face, it came her time to end line, and she goes up there and takes her dress, and wipes the spit off the Bible, says my Lord, what have they done to Your Word? Forgive them, they don't know what they're doing. And she refused to spit on the Bible, and she wiped off the spit off the Bible, and they put a gun to her head, and they shot her. Why did she do that? Because Christ was precious.

This is real brothers and sisters. This is where the rubber meets the road. When Christ becomes so precious to you, that you're willing to lose everything for the sake of knowing Him.

And I feel I don't even know what I'm talking about. I feel I'm not even worthy to untie the shoes of brothers and sisters right now who are suffering to that degree for the cause of Christ. By my hope and prayer, I often think Lord when persecution comes, and it's coming brothers and sisters, persecution is coming.

When it comes, Lord will I be ready? How do I get ready? One thing that gives me hope, you who believe, He is precious. And if He's so precious to me at that very moment, and He's so precious to you, God will give us an ocean of grace to go through whatever He's called us to go through. Even right now when it's saying goodbye to your job for the sake of no compromise.

Praise be to God for the grace that God's given that brother. Make these decisions. Why did He do it? Christ is precious.

He's precious. What is it in life, some of the things that we just encounter every day that are precious? One thing I think about is water. We talked about rain.

Water is so precious. What is Christ called? He is the fountain of living water. You know, sometimes you don't know what you have until it's gone.

Sometimes you don't know what you really have until it's gone, and we take it for granted. And I'll give you probably just a silly little story, but it's an illustration that comes to mind. I remember when I was a young man, and I was really struggled, tormented with evil, filthy thoughts.

I just was tormented with sin, inner sin. And I thought the only thing I knew to do is saddle my horse and ride as far as I could in the mountains without any food, and just to go. I had a tent and a bed roll packed on my saddle.

I said, Lord, I want to leave, and I don't ever want to come back until I meet with You, and something happens in me. I'm a wretched man. And I remember leaving without any food or water, and it was a hot summer day, and I'd ridden for miles and miles.

And I got up on this mountain, and I was getting thirsty. I thought, surely I'll find water. And I rode and rode and could not find any water.

Finally, I ride up on a pool of water, but it's stagnant, and it's filthy, and it stinks. There's no way I can drink that water. I'll get sick.

So I ride and ride for more miles, looking for water all day long, looking for water. Now my tongue is sticking to the roof of my mouth. My throat is parched.

And I'm thinking, probably wasn't a good idea not to bring a canteen full of water. All I can think about is water. You take a man who, let's say, who's beyond that, who's dying of thirst in the desert.

He's thirsty for one thing. You can write him a check for \$10,000. He could care less.

When you're thirsty, the only thing that can satisfy is what you're thirsty for. I was thirsty for water, and I could find none. So I kept riding.

Just before the sun went down, I rode up on a spring that was coming out of the side of a hill, out of rocks. Crystal clear, cold, clean water. And I dove into that.

I put my head under it. It went all over me. I just gulped and gulped and gulped.

Nothing tasted so good. Nothing was so refreshing as water. What does the Scripture say of our Lord Jesus? Drink from this water and you will never thirst again.

He is the fountain of living water. He alone satisfies. And nothing outside of Him satisfies.

That is a lie from the devil. The lie the devil has with all these temptations of the world and every temptation of sin is look at this. There is something outside of Christ that will satisfy.

It is a lie. It may bring pleasure for a season, but it always leaves you thirstier than you ever were before. He is the water of life.

What else is precious? Life itself is precious. How precious is this gift called life? How precious is it that our hearts are beating right now and God is causing those hearts to beat? We are breathing. We are sharing this fellowship, this time together with one another because we have all been given this precious gift called life.

And sometimes suddenly we are reminded how precious it is. Just a few days before we flew to Australia, our precious niece, 16 years old, was suddenly killed in a car wreck. And that just shakes everybody.

A life. And you can imagine mom and dad and brothers and sisters, what they wouldn't give to just hear her voice one more time, have one more hug. I'm just saying that to you to say life is so precious.

When we were in the children's hospital with Luke, day after day, week after week, month after month, as he was battling cancer and all these other precious little children with little bald heads were fighting for their lives every single day. And some days one would die. You see how precious is this gift of life.

Every single moment that you have with your children, every single day is a precious gift from God. Life is so precious. What does it say of our Lord Jesus Christ? When Christ who is our life shall appear.

He says, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.

Boy, that's come to home recently. Our niece was a born again believer. We will see her again.

And I kept thinking of this glorious truth. Those who live and believe in Him will never die. What an incredible truth.

Why? Because Christ is eternal life. We shall never die. There's coming a day when we're all going to be together in the presence of Almighty God and there will be no more death.

We will never ever die. Christ is our life. Hallelujah.

Yes, He's precious. How precious is fresh air, freedom. I remember when my friend Kevin Turner telling me a story.

He was ministering in Eritrea and he told me a story about this young man by the name of Benji. Benji was being persecuted with some other believers for preaching the gospel. They put Benji and his friends in a shipping container, a steel shipping container in the middle of the summer.

They had one can that they all had to use for the bathroom. The smell. By the grace of God, somehow by God's providence, they were released and he was set free.

But day after day, in this shipping container, you can imagine the stench. You can imagine the heat. And each one of these precious brothers, there was a little crack at the bottom of the door that was locked.

And each one of these precious brothers would take turns. And each one, just for a few moments, would put his nose down there at the crack to get a breath of fresh air. How precious was that breath of fresh air.

And they would take turns just to get a breath of fresh air. Sometimes you don't know what you have and how precious it is until it's gone. What does that say to me? There's something in the Scriptures called Ruach.

The Spirit of God. The breath of God. How precious is this gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of the living God. Is He precious to you? If the Holy Spirit is precious to you, you commune with Him. You talk to Him.

You fellowship with Him. You obey Him. When He convicts, you listen.

When He's not precious to you, He convicts and you say no and you grieve Him. How precious is the breath of God. The Spirit of the living God.

He is to be cherished. He is to be obeyed. He is to be honored.

He is to be welcomed. He's not welcome in many so-called churches. The Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit, the breath of God. He is precious. Freedom is precious.

Can you imagine Benji being let out of that shipping container? What joy! What gratitude! You talk to an ex-drug addict who has been absolutely set free by the grace of God and the power of God. You talk to somebody who has been absolutely set free from the grip of pornography or other addictions. How precious is that freedom? It brings joy.

It brings gratitude. I was a slave to sin and Jesus Christ set me free. And what is Christ? He is our freedom.

If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. He is our freedom. He is everything.

Christ is precious. He is liberty. He is life.

He is love. He is everything. But not only is Christ Himself precious, look back with me here in 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 18.

There's something else that's absolutely precious to the believer. 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 18. For as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

How precious is the blood of Christ! Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow. We said that last night. Those of you who have been forgiven and made clean, doesn't it feel so good to be cleaned? To be clean, to be forgiven, to be washed white as snow.

If someone's here tonight that doesn't know that freedom, that forgiveness, that cleansing power in the blood of Christ, tonight look to Him. Tonight put your faith in Him. And may Jesus wash your sins away.

There's nothing like being clean. Nothing like being forgiven. Power in the blood of Christ.

To have all my sins washed away, blotted out, never to remember again, God says. Hallelujah. How precious is the blood of Christ.

There's something else that is precious. Turn to 2 Peter chapter 1. 2 Peter chapter 1. The apostle says beginning in verse 2, May true grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises. What kind of promises? Precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

How precious is the Word of God. How precious are the promises of Christ. How precious is the promise that God has given some of us for our children.

How precious that promise was that God spoke to me concerning our son Luke when He said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. I tell you, that precious becomes so promised that you lay hold of it with both hands, with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind, and with all of your strength. Because it's the Word of God that cannot fail.

God's promises were so precious to us. In that hospital room, we took window paint and we painted His promises on every window in the room. Every doctor and every nurse that came in there often times would look up and read them.

They're precious, precious promises. There's a couple in here tonight that's been given a promise from God that they will have a child someday. And we're going to stand with them in prayer believing God.

How precious is His Word. How precious are His promises. How precious are His promises.

Promises such as, as the Father has loved me, even so have I loved you. Precious promises when He says no one can snatch you out of My hand. How about this one? I will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

How precious is that promise. Be not afraid. Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Promises from the living God. Promises that cannot fail. His blood is precious.

His promises are precious. He is precious to all who believe. The question is, have you truly believed? And if Christ is really precious to you, everything then becomes about Him.

Everything becomes about Him. You know what else? If He is precious to you, you talk about Him. You tell others about Him.

Don't tell me He's precious to you if you're keeping Him to yourself. If something is valuable, precious to someone, they can't help but talk about it. Mothers who love their babies can't help but talk about them.

Men who love the fish can't help but talk about it. Right? And those who love Jesus with all their heart can't help but speak of Him. Why is that? That Peter, James, and John, they beat them.

They put them in prison. They can't scare it out of them. They can't beat it out of them.

They said we can't help but speak of the One who saved us, who loved us, who set us free. When Christ is precious to you, you proclaim Him. And that's what the world needs to hear.

And they need to hear from eyewitnesses. I keep hearing that today. Eyewitnesses of His majesty.

The world doesn't need a testimony of what somebody heard about somebody else who knew God and God did something in their life. They want to hear from you. What did God do in your life? Who is Jesus Christ to you today? Eyewitnesses.

Personal testimonies. If Christ is precious to you, you will proclaim Him. If Christ is precious to you, you will worship Him.

And what is worship? Can I remind you? What is worship? It goes beyond just singing songs. As wonderful as that is, and I love that, praising the Lord like that. But what is worship really? Worship is bringing something to God of worth.

It's laying down. It's giving. What is it that is valuable? I think one of the most beautiful pictures in all of Scripture is that woman with the alabaster box that we were reminded of earlier in the testimonies.

She was a sinful woman, the Scripture said. That was what her reputation was known by. But this woman had met the Lord Jesus Christ and suddenly, nothing compared.

That which the world looked at and said, wait a minute, that's an alabaster box full of ointment and it's worth more than a year's wages. Be careful with that thing. That's precious.

That's valuable. And she comes to Jesus and breaks it. And pours it all out upon Him.

Beloved, that is worship. When you withhold nothing from the Lord. And I mean nothing.

I mean every single thing that He puts His hand upon that He speaks to you. You have surrendered all. You give all.

Lord, all my heart. I was thinking of this earlier. The Lord reminded me.

The words of John the Baptist. He must increase. Speaking of Jesus.

I must decrease. How must You increase, Lord? His praises through me must increase. Worship must increase.

Fire of love, devotion, passion for His glory must increase. Everything, Lord. I want more of You.

I want more of Your heart. If Christ is precious to you tonight, I challenge you to make this your prayer tonight. Lord, enlarge my heart.

Show me more of Your glory. Let me see You more clearly. Take everything, Lord.

Take it all. What if it requires you to leave behind your home, your job, houses, land, relatives? Knowing Jesus is worth losing everything. Everything.

And whatever you lose can't compare to what He's provided in Himself. And He takes care of His own. He takes care of His children.

Very, very good care of His children. Father, I pray in the mighty and holy name of Jesus that You would enlarge our hearts and expand our vision to see more of You. The distractions, the veil that clouds our vision of You, Lord Jesus, and all of Your beauty and glory and majesty, I ask You to remove that tonight.

Remove that tonight, O God. That we may see You more clearly. That we may know You more intimately.

That we may worship You more truly. And we want to say to You, Lord, as Your children, You are precious to us, Lord Jesus. Help us, Lord, to respond in obedience to You.

You say this is the only way, really, to show the measure of our love for You in return. Whether or not we'll keep Your commandments. Whether or not we'll obey You when You speak to us, when You convict us.

I'm asking You, Lord. I'm just asking for more of You. Now do Your work tonight.

And if someone has not yet truly encountered You, the living God, I pray You compel them now to come to You by faith. To come to You in repentance. To say goodbye.

To say so long. To say, I forsake all. Everything.

I leave it behind. And I'm coming to You, Jesus, with all that I am. I'm coming to You.

I'm believing You. I'm casting myself upon Your mercy and Your grace. Lord, I pray that salvation would come to this house tonight.

To any and every one, Lord, who has not yet truly met You. Do it, Lord, for Your glory and honor, I pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.

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