

We Preach Jesus Christ

by Mack Tomlinson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of focusing on Jesus Christ, the Savior, and the center of the universe. It delves into the significance of knowing Christ personally and the eternal impact of His life, death, and resurrection. The message highlights the need for repentance, faith, and acknowledging Jesus as the only Savior who forgives sins, offering rest to all who come to Him.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:5, Acts 17:26, John 3:16, Acts 4:12, Matthew 11:28, Romans 10:9, John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Focus on Christ", "The Importance of Personal Relationship with Jesus"

Description

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Transcript

Good morning. I don't need a mic on, do I? Good. Good to be back here, as always, to my New England home.

It's nice to have homes, different places. So, it's a joy to be back, a joyful weekend. And I just want to share one part of one verse this morning for a few moments.

So, it's found in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, one part of a verse. 2 Corinthians 4, 5. It's very simple words. 2 Corinthians 4, 5. For we preach, not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

Too many pastors and preachers talk about themselves, or even subtly preach themselves. And that's a horrible thing, that's a carnal thing, that's a wrong thing. And that's why the church often is discredited in the eyes of society.

But this morning, I want to do something just very simple. I want to talk about Jesus Christ. Now, let's just, it's going to be a monologue, but I want you and your mind to make it a dialogue.

Because I want to, as if we were sitting across the table having a cup of coffee. And if you're a believer in Christ, this would be our, you and I rehearsing who Jesus Christ is. Sharing.

And we have a lot to say. But for the person who's a non-Christian, or who maybe is a nominal church member, they believe intellectually in God, but Christ himself is not really real to them. If I was sitting across the table from a person who didn't know anything about Christ, and you know, there's a lot of people increasingly, widely across America, that really know nothing about him.

They're not Bible readers. They're not church attenders. And they really are just kind of blank.

They know some things from the past. They've heard some things. They remember some things.

Maybe they grew up in church. But when it comes down to it, they really don't hardly know anything. Especially what the Bible teaches.

So, for that person, if I was having coffee with them, and they ask me, you know, tell me about Jesus Christ. I hear about him, you know. I grew up in church, but I've forgotten everything.

So, how should I view who Jesus Christ is? That's this message this morning. And it's a monologue, but you, here, make it a dialogue. So, let's do that, because I want to speak about Jesus Christ.

I want to set before your mind him. I'm only going to speak about him, because every person in the world either truly knows Christ personally, and he's real to them, and he's precious to them, or they don't know him. He's a stranger.

He's a historical figure. But he's not in their life, and they don't think about him. They're just living their life.

Everyone either knows him or does not know him. But I want you, I want to encourage you to let your mind and your thoughts be upon the things I say about Christ today. Just consider the things that I say.

And then perhaps it will let you return to the Bible and see what the New Testament actually says about him. So, let your thoughts today, if possible, focus upon him. But make it more personal.

Jesus Christ, him and you. Christ and me. Christ and you personally.

Christ, what is your belief concerning him? What is your view of him? Jesus Christ, the Bible teaches, is the center and object of the whole universe. He is, according to Genesis 1 and Hebrews 1, God, creator. He is the sustainer, creator and sustainer of all life.

Not only of this universe and all the galaxies and our solar system, but he is the creator and sustainer of you and I now every day. He's the cornerstone of all the universe and of all of history. Even our calendar, before Christ, after Christ.

His coming and his arrival separates history. He's the giver of life. He's the purpose of life.

He's the end of history and time. And when this world is gone, and it will be, and probably all of us may be gone before this world is gone. Maybe not.

But our end is coming. And when the world is gone, Jesus Christ will be forever the center of all of eternity. And every one of us, the Bible teaches, will stand before him and give an account of our life.

No preacher will be there. No priest will be there. Granddad, grandmom, dad, mom.

Nobody will be there. We will stand before him and give an account of our life. He is the center of all of history.

So let me peruse. Let's just think about him quickly through the Old Testament and then some in the New. If we're having that cup of coffee and somebody said, You know, is Jesus only in the New Testament? No.

He's throughout the Old Testament. A friend of mine who I was in college and graduate school with, I studied with him in Israel after college. He went on to become a leading Old Testament scholar and a dean of a university in Missouri.

And so every time I go to Missouri where he is, he and I will have lunch and catch up a little bit. And one day I said to him, Bob, how many of the Psalms are about Jesus? And he said, well, Mac, how many are there? I said, there's 150. He said, I think there's 150 Psalms that are about Jesus.

My point is, from Genesis 1 to the end of Malachi, Christ himself is the subject of the whole Old Testament. Every book is about him. You remember the places where an angel would come and make appearances in human form? That was Christ in pre-incarnate form.

He was showing up. He was making house calls. He was coming before he was incarnated through the womb of Mary.

He's Jacob's ladder. The one wrestling with Jacob all night, that was Jesus. Jesus and Jacob had a wrestling match and Jesus won.

He's all through the book of Genesis. He is the shepherd and king throughout all the Psalms. Proverbs, he's the wisdom of all the Proverbs.

And when you read the Old Testament, don't look for principles and stories. Look for Christ himself in all the principles and in all the stories. Because Jesus had a walk with two guys on the road going to a town called Emmaus.

And they didn't know who he was. They thought they knew a lot. But Luke 24 says, it was Christ and he didn't reveal himself to them.

This is after he's alive again. And the Bible says that beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he declared in all the Old Testament the things concerning himself. And that would have been something to get on video.

So he said the whole Old Testament is about me. So when you read the Old Testament, look for him. Because he fills it.

He is the ancient of days from all everlasting. You get to the book of Isaiah. He is the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

Now when an Orthodox Jew reads Isaiah 53 today, he thinks this is talking about the nation of Israel. But you read it close. A nation was never bruised for our iniquities.

A nation was never punished for our sins. But Isaiah 53, it's as if Isaiah traveled back in time and stood at the foot of the cross and he realized everything that was going on. This is Messiah.

He is a lamb being slain. All our sins are being put upon him. And God is crushing him with punishment.

Our punishment that our sins deserve. Isaiah 53 is the perfect picture of Christ's death. He is the forsaken one of Psalm 22, who cried out from the cross, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He's the one in Song of Solomon that is the lover of our souls.

Do you believe today, personally, genuinely, and be honest with yourself. Do you believe today that Jesus Christ loves your soul? That he loves you? This is a valid question. This is an eternal question.

This is bigger than, Do you love Arby's sandwiches? Do you love the summer peach milkshakes from Chick-fil-A? That's my favorite summer drink, by the way. Listen, we love so many things on the earth. We love our grandkids.

They're nine, right? It's nine. We love so many things, and God has freely given us all things to enjoy. Our homes, friends, family.

But listen, Jesus Christ trumps all of it. Do you believe that he loves your soul? See, he's the lover of our souls in the Song of Solomon. Christ is the one that, the prophet Zechariah said this, They will look upon him whom they have pierced, that means on the cross, and they will mourn and weep bitterly.

And you know, that was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the Jews and many others realized that they had crucified the Messiah, the Son of God, and they wept, and they grieved. In Daniel, Christ is the Son of Man. That's a title for his humanity, that Jesus really was a human being.

He's the Son of Man, but Daniel says he's going to come with the clouds of heaven, and to him is given dominion, glory, and a kingdom. Listen, you wrap up all of history, every prime minister, every dictator, every president, and all of history combined, their rule, their dominion, their authority, compared to Jesus Christ, is just a drop in the bucket of the ocean. Christ has ultimate, all dominion and authority.

Is this your view of him? The little book of Hosea says he's the loving redeemer of the unfaithful wife. Remember Hosea? Charlotte has a message, has a living sermon to Israel. I'm going to love the unfaithful spouse.

Jesus Christ is the loving redeemer of the unfaithful one. In the book of Micah, he's the one that's going to come from old little town of Bethlehem. He's going to come from Bethlehem, Micah said, whose going forth is from everlasting.

In the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who is he? He's the true humanity. He's the son of God, truly God incarnate. He's the savior, lord, and king.

He is the word made flesh, meaning, when Mary was conceived, conceived in the womb, the Holy Spirit took the divine nature of Jesus, planted Christ as a seed in her womb, and then he created a human body for Christ, and they were brought together miraculously. And the thing born in her was the holy one of God. And then she brought forth that boy, born of a woman, born under the law.

In the book of Acts, who is Christ? He is the one whom the father glorified on the cross as lord in Christ. You read the epistles, Romans through the end, Christ is everything. He's the head of the church, he's the lord of all, and he is in the Christian by the Holy Spirit who indwells the believer.

So, let's just think about this. First, to the Christian, who is Christ? To the follower of Jesus, remember we're still having this monologue dialogue. To the follower of Christ, he's everything.

Christ is everything. That's why people in the world don't understand why a true Christian is talking about Christ, thinking about him, speaking about him. They revolve their life around him.

He is the Messiah sent from heaven. He's a true man who came as a son of God. He's the only one in history that has revealed God to mankind.

There are no other revelations of God the creator to man except in the exclusive person of his son, Jesus Christ. He is Emmanuel, God with us. He's the promised one the entire Old Testament speaks about.

He's the reconnaissance general who came on the solo rescue mission to save a lost world. Who is he to you? Now, let's just pause a moment. Now, the dialogue's in place, but you answer silently.

Who is Christ to you? Who is he to me? To the believer, he's savior. He's a friend of sinners. Did you know, you read the four gospels, anyone who ever came to Jesus, needy, broken, hurting, lost, searching, sick in their soul, sick in their body, you read all the accounts, you ought to count them up, all the individual encounters he had.

You count them up. He never turned anyone away. He never turned anyone away.

Well, I'm too sinful. They came to him because they were sinful. He never turned anyone away.

Today, he's the same. He will never turn anyone away. No matter your past, no matter how much your sin is, no matter dark secrets, no matter how much you failed, he's the friend of sinners, isn't he, Robert? He's the priest, the only priest who can forgive sins.

He is your advocate. He's your lawyer in heaven. He's the only one that can plead your case.

I have sin, what am I going to do? There's an advocate. The lawyer died for us to plead our case before God. He's the master of the world.

He's the light of the world. He's the bread of life. He's the rock of ages.

He is a coming king. The book of Revelation we read from and other places in the New Testament says that Jesus Christ will return bodily one day suddenly, unexpected. Nobody will have time to grab their computer or their iPhone.

You won't have time to do anything. He'll be there. The sky will roll back.

He will appear and it's all over. And he will come as the judge of all the earth. To the Christian, he's the loving Savior and Shepherd.

And listen, you may be healthy this morning, but he is our life full-time caregiver. My mom, my adoptive mom, was Linda's third grade school teacher. We grew up in Clarendon.

Some of you know where that is. Others you'll never know where that is. Don't look it up.

It's probably not even on the internet. West Texas. My adoptive mom, my cousin, was Linda's third grade school teacher.

And when she got dementia, well before that, she lived with us the last eight years of her life and died of dementia in our home. Linda became her caregiver primarily. We did it together, but she's the hero in that.

Listen, you may be healthy today, but every breath in your lungs, God gives it. Every beat of your heart, he's keeping your heart alive. He is your full-time caregiver, though you know it not.

He is. He's a friend who sticks closer than any brother. He is the only GPS to navigate this dangerous world.

For the drowning one going under, he's the only strong arm that can grab you and save you. For the lost wandering one, he's the only keeper and guide in life and in death. A few weeks ago, there was a strong windstorm in Denton where we live on Saturday night.

Strong one. Outside there were trash cans blown over, there were some limbs down in the yard disarray, so we drive to church. And on the way, there's a school down on the corner.

We turn to go to church, and there's a row of trees there. And I noticed one tree had a big limb hanging down, and it had blown down. But only one.

And I thought, that was the weak limb. And the storm got it. The other limbs were healthy, but the weak one, the damaged one, the diseased one, the wind got it.

Listen. There are so many changes in life. There are so many dangers.

Change will come. And only with Jesus Christ will people not get broken off. Because without him, we are weak limbs.

Why? Because we're diseased. With what? The sin. And we know it.

Our conscience tells us that. But you know what? We can soothe our conscience, we can do so many things to entertain ourselves, so we quieten the conscience. But the conscience is pretty, it kind of wins the battle.

Unless you harden yourself so much, and you sear your conscience, and deny it, and then you get a conscience that's hardened, and things don't bother you anymore. And that's a dangerous place to be. So the question is, what will all of us do with Jesus Christ? For the believer, the believer keeps trusting him, Christ is their life, he's their hope and strength and guide in life, he's their one hope in death.

But for the unbeliever, here's a simple question to think about. If you don't believe in Christ truly, savingly, what about your sins? What's going to atone for sin? Good works? Will you gamble? Here's the balances, and here's all your sins, many, all of us, many, many. Boy, the scale is really down, really dragging the ground.

All right. Here's your good works. Try to be a good husband? Try to be a good dad? I've been a faithful employee? Are your good works, best efforts, ever going to outweigh your sin? No.

But even if they could outweigh them, they'll never pay for the sin. Nothing can pay for our sin except someone who died for the sin. And there's only one.

There's only one person who lovingly came to pay for the sins of the world. That's why he came. He came to be a payment for sin.

And that's who he is. For the broken one, he's the healer. For the blind, he's the sight giver.

For the sinful, he's the only one who forgives him. He is the answer to everything in life and in death. Every single thing.

The questions, who can forgive my sin? Who can save me from the fear of death? You know, I've had two open heart surgeries. The first one, I was trembling the night before, afraid to die. The second one, I had a little practice.

I did better. But as I lay there, both times, I realized, I have Christ. I know Him.

I love Him. He's my Savior. He revealed Himself to me.

I came to believe in Him when I was 19 years old. And I love Him. I know I'm safe.

If I don't wake up, I know I'm safe. I have this assurance. I know where I'll be.

Not because of me, but because of Him. So, Jesus Christ, I commend Him to us all afresh today. He's the living God, the Savior of the world, the one who died and is alive forevermore.

To the believer, He's absolutely everything. But, for the unbeliever, the person who would say, you know, I'm really not religious. None of this is really real to me.

I'm not a Bible reader. To the unbeliever, who has no relationship with Christ. Who is Christ to them? He is the ultimate X-factor.

He is the author and meaning of life. He's the one who gave you life and existence. And He keeps you alive every moment.

He's the cosmic, moral reality. Like the blood in your veins, the air in your lungs, and the beats of your heart, He is the every second sustainer of life to every person. We're all alive today, this morning, because He chooses to let us live another day.

Why? Well, the Bible tells us in Acts 17, Luke, the physician, makes an incredible statement. In Acts 17, Luke says that God made all people who live on the earth in all of history and He put them where they are when they're alive. And He's controlling the events and circumstances of their life for one reason.

That you might seek after God and come to know Him. You're here this morning by God's appointment and if you don't know Christ, this morning, God is saying you can seek Him and know Him because He is the creator, sustainer, and final judge of every person. He is the terminator of everyone's life.

But most importantly, He's the only Savior who can forgive sins. He died and rose again and He says to every person, come to Me. Look unto Me.

You might say, what do I need to do? How do I need to improve myself? You don't. What more do I need to do? You don't. Do nothing.

Just believe the message. Believe in your heart. Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world.

He did, in time and in space, historically, die on a Roman cross outside the city walls of Jerusalem. It's historical record. Josephus, the greatest historian of the Jews, he documents it.

He died there Why? To pay for our sins. What was happening on those six hours while he hung on the cross from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.? He was suffering in utter weakness. He was abandoned by his father in heaven for the first time ever in eternity.

God abandoned him. God forsook him. Why? Because God was putting the sins of the world upon him.

All the guilt and the punishment. We deserve justice for our sins. And he who knew no sin took our place as our substitute.

And our punishment was put upon Christ that we might receive instead forgiveness. That's quite a deal, if you ask me. And you know what? It's free.

No works, no goodness, no penance, no efforts, just as I am. When I was 19 years old, I was an orphan when I was 8 years old. My cousin raised me.

Raised me in church. It was always boring. From 8 to 19, I didn't believe anything.

I believed intellectually God existed. I even believed intellectually Jesus is probably the one. And I did believe intellectually.

I had a reverence for the Bible. I thought, you know, that's probably God's word, whatever that meant. But none of it was real to me.

Until one night, a lifelong friend came back from the army, got with me, and he began to talk to me about Christ. Not church, not religion, about Christ. We rode in his little Volkswagen three hours on a Saturday night, last Saturday night of July, 1973.

And suddenly, it began to resonate with me. I realized two things. I only knew two things.

I'm a real sinner. I really am. I really am sinful.

And my sins have separated me from God. And Jesus is a real Savior. And He'll take me just as I am.

Warts and all, sins and all, failures and all, the horrible stuff. I would never want anybody to know He did die for me and He took it. And He loves me.

I didn't know how to pray. But I prayed because I wanted to. I said this as a prayer.

Jesus, I have nothing to give You but myself and my sin. But here I am. I want You.

I'm Yours. Now listen, that's not a flowery prayer. It got the job done.

Have you ever come to Christ in your heart and just said, Lord, I want to trust You. I want to know You. I can't clean up my act, but I'm coming just as I am.

That's the Gospel. That's it. That's all that's needed.

There's an old song that says, the only thing He requires is that you feel your need of Him. That's all He requires. So someone would say, well, how can I come to know Christ? How good do I have to be? How

much do I have to improve? You don't.

What good deeds do I need to improve on? None. All that's required is repentance and faith. Now let's just define those.

What's repentance? The Bible says that a person has to repent toward God. Repentance is not changing yourself. It simply means I acknowledge I really have sinned.

And I'm sorry for my sin in my heart. And I want to turn from it. Doesn't mean you wash yourself.

Doesn't mean you clean up your act. No. Repentance is just a turning of a heart.

It says, Lord, I'm sinful. I don't want any more. And you turn in your heart to Christ.

Repentance and faith. What is faith? It's not intellectual ascent. It is trust in the heart.

You let your heart go to God in prayer and you bring words and you say, Lord, I do believe. I believe in my heart Jesus Christ is a Savior. I believe you died for me.

Seemed like I remember a young lady one time who told her dad when he asked her, do you believe Christ died for you? Do you believe Christ died for sinners? Yes. Do you believe he died for your sin? She couldn't answer. Faith says, I believe he died for my sin and I want him.

Jesus said, come to me. All who labor and are heavy laden. We labor in life.

We labor with many things, but the biggest labor is our sin. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest.

Faith in Christ is the only need. That weak and broken limb, that's us without Christ. Who and what is Christ to you today? Why don't we bow for a moment of prayer and I want you to just tell him that this morning.

You tell Christ if you have anything in your heart, tell him what he is to you or tell him what you want him to be to you. Let's just pause for these moments and you tell him. Father, thank you for the truth about Jesus Christ.

This is what the Bible says. This is the record that God has given to us eternal life and this life is in his son. The one who has the son has life.

The one who does not have the son does not have life. Father, bless the truth to every heart today. In Christ's name, Amen.

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