

Who Is Christ?

by Rolfe Barnard

Rolfe Barnard's sermon explores the profound implications of recognizing Jesus as both the expected Messiah and the rejected Lord, emphasizing the necessity of true faith and obedience in the life of a believer.

Duration: 23:49

Scripture: Isaiah 45:23, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 15:14, John 3:3, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 2:10

Topics: "Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of knowing and confessing who Jesus is. He starts by discussing the foundational doctrines of the Word of God and the eternal purpose of God in electing believers. The preacher then asks the audience if they truly believe that Jesus is the Savior and Lord of sinners, just as Peter confessed Him to be the Messiah and Son of the living God. He warns against having a perverted religion and being led by blind leaders. The sermon concludes with a plea to confess Jesus as Christ and Lord, obey His commands, and live a life that reflects this belief. The preacher references 1 John 5:1, which states that whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and highlights the need for more people to give evidence of their new birth through their confession and belief in Jesus as the Savior and Lord.

Transcript

On the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the content of the gospel, and for months we've been talking about the basic doctrines of the word of God, that bottom and foundation, the proclamation of the gospel. We have devoted many, many weeks to a discussion of God's eternal purpose in electing us in Christ, and now we're talking about this wonderful Christ who is God's Son and our Lord.

Last Lord's Day we ask you the question, do you actually in the heart as a result of a revelation from God, a gift of God to you for coming to Christ and saving faith is God's gift, do you actually believe that he is the Savior and the Lord of sinners? Who do you say Jesus is? The question was asked of the disciples, and Peter, answering for them, said, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. And God's Son said that God the Father revealed that blessed truth unto them. Oh, do you know who Jesus is? You know, who do you say Jesus is today? Millions confess that Jesus is the very anointed, sent Messiah, the Savior and the Lord of all mankind.

In 1 John 5, verse 1, we are given a catechistic statement that says that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Believing that Jesus, the man, is really the sent one from God, the Savior and

Lord, is said to be an evidence that one has had an experience of the new birth. But today the tragedy is that we have so few who give evidences that they have received the new birth, although with their mouths they confess that they believe that Jesus is the Christ.

Some, we are afraid, say it because they have been taught to say it. Others really believe it. They have been made subjects and recipients of God's wonderful revelation.

They thus have seen with their inmost beings and eyes and experienced the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, a confession that Jesus is the Christ must come from the heart. If otherwise it's any good, and if a confession would save us, then the demons would be the first people that ever got saved, for they were the first to cry out, We know who thou art, the Holy One of God.

You know, James, the Apostle, said that demons believe and tremble. But the sad fact today is that so many confess the Christ but tremble not at all. You know, my dear ones, more is involved in the confession of Christ than we seem to think in these days.

In the early days of the Church, a man entered into a spiritual revolution when he believed and confessed Jesus as the Christ. Such a confession in those days caused the Pharisees to boil with anger. One of them, a man by the name of Saul, heard about it and became a persecutor and a Christian killer.

The Gentiles in those days thought that the disciples were either fools, or sometimes they called them babblers, and sometimes they said they were mad. The confession in those days that Jesus is the Christ turned the world upside down, because with the confession, the Spirit of God added his confirmation and power. But it is needless for me to call to your attention that something has happened.

The name of Jesus Christ is profaned and confessed today, without apparently producing any drastic and noticeable effects on those who either profane his name or confess it, or those who hear it. I was interested to read in my readings the last few days an article by Brother Tozer, a man of God who does call men in churches today to think he has a prophetic voice. He is not satisfied with the great numbers of professing Christians today, and he had an article on the subject was, The Misunderstood Doctrine of Faith.

He called attention to the importance of faith. We are saved by grace through faith. He called attention to the fact that the revelation of God in Christ is received and perceived only through faith, and that blind eyes cannot see Christ in the gospel, that Christ has revealed God, but that only eyes that have been opened can see God in the face of Jesus Christ.

He writes to the point that the modern conception of faith is not the biblical teaching about faith. He says that when faith is used today, it doesn't mean what the Bible means by faith. Inherently, I want to list seven causes of the uneasiness Mr. Tozer professes about this matter of faith.

He says one thing that causes him great uneasiness is the lack of spiritual fruit in the lives of so many who claim to have faith. Second, he says the rarity of a radical change in the conduct and general outlook of persons professing faith in Christ. Third, the failure of our Bible teachers to define or even describe the thing to which the word faith is supposed to refer.

Fourth, the heart-breaking failure of multitudes of seekers who never find, be they so ever earnest. Fifth, the real danger that a doctrine that is parroted so widely and received so uncritically by so many, the real danger that that is false as understood by them. Sixth, he says that faith is used today as a substitute for

first, obedience.

Second, it's used as an escape from reality, it's used as a refuge from the necessity of hard thinking, and it's used as a hiding place for weak character. Seventh, he says plain horse sense tells us that anything that makes no change in man who professes makes no difference to God, either. The change from no faith to faith makes no difference in the life of so many today.

Then Lester Tozer has these words to say about what faith is. First, he says faith is not believing a statement that we know to be true, for faith has to do not so much with the mind as with the will. And faith rests upon the character of God, and no other proof is needed for real faith.

Faith is confidence in God and in his Son, and therefore a response of the soul to him in whom we have confidence. Then Lester Tozer says what I've been trying to say over this radio for months, that faith is impossible apart from the work of the Spirit. He says that faith is the gift of God to a penitent one.

It has nothing to do with the senses, or the evidence is afforded. Faith is a miracle. He says it's the ability God gives to trust his Son.

He says that faith does not bring the life, under obedience to Christ as Lord, is inadequate and must betray the victim at the last. The man who believes, Mr. Tozer says, will obey, and failure to obey is convincing proof that true faith is not present. He concludes by saying to attempt the impossible, God must give faith or there will be no faith.

And he gives faith to repentant hearts. When we open the Bible, it is clear that Christ was the expected one by the Israelitist people. But the Old Testament prophecies are clear that when the Messiah came, that he would rule the individual.

When Peter said, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God, he understood what he was talking about. In the Old Testament prophecies we have three claims prophesied for Christ. It is claimed in the Old Testament that when he appears he will come with world-wide claims, that when he appears he will come claiming a world-wide throne.

In the second place in the Old Testament it is prophesied that when Christ appears on the scene down here on this earth, he will have eternal claims, he will claim to have the right to sit on an eternal throne. And then it is clear in the Old Testament that the prophecies say that when Christ comes he will have personal claims, he will have a personal claim on every human being. That's the way the Old Testament talked about this coming one.

So let's get it now. When he came, the Jews understood that he would have authority, that he would have the voice of authority, and that he would rule the individual. And the Israelite knew, the one who studied the Old Testament, that the Messiah, when he came, that there was one thing to be certain, that his Lordship would be a settled issue, and that when he came to accept him, was identical with accepting his authority.

It meant to them that one must render to him full devotion and faith and obedience. And thus when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared on the scene on Palestinian soil, the question for the Jews was not one of whether the Messiah had authority to rule, but was one of recognition of whether or not the one who came and said, I am he, of whether he'd be recognized and thus his authority accepted, or whether he'd be rejected and unrecognized. In this, my friends, is the dreamer of the New Testament, especially of John's

gospel.

Here we have the record of the failure of the Jewish people to recognize their God-sent Messiah, the failure to recognize him. And thus they rejected him. In the book of John, we are told, he came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Here we have the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, and thus the denial of his claims to be the sent one of God. And thus the New Testament, soon after we start reading it, gives us a portrait of Jesus as the rejected Messiah. There are no more poignant words in all literature than those words, he came unto his own, and his own received him not.

They said, this is not the one, this is not the one. And later on you'll hear that piercing cry, we will not have this man to reign over us. You know, when he came, he had to be rejected or accepted because he claimed, demanding, repent ye, for I'm here, God's here, the kingdom of God is here.

That's what he said. And his claims, people had to do something with them. And so folks said, well, he's not the one we've been looking for, he's not the kind of Messiah we want, he's not the one that we'll bow to, we won't have him to reign over us.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. Why was the Lord Jesus rejected by his own kinsmen? My, isn't it tragic? You see, a Jew today in his unbelief, he still has the marks of his rejection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. And if he's an Orthodox Jew, he still looks for the coming of the sent one from God.

But he's clear on one thing, he says, that man Jesus you Christians say you worship, he's not the Messiah, he's not the one in whom all authority has been given, we still look for that one to come. It's clear, I think, in the New Testament, that our Lord Jesus Christ was not rejected by his own race, largely because of his world-wide claims, nor was he rejected because of his eternal claims of sitting on an eternal throne. But if you read the New Testament carefully, you'll find he is rejected then like he is rejected now, because he pressed his personal claims on everybody.

He said to the leaders of the Jews, your religion is vile, it's perverted, and you need a new life, and you need to be born again, and you need repentance and faith. He said the leaders are leading you, they are blind leaders, leading you into blind alleys. So we're not surprised to read in the New Testament how the leaders got together and condemned him to death.

You know what they thought they'd do? They thought they'd get rid of his claims by putting him to death. That's exactly why they killed him. He said, you're not right with God, you're not fit to lead.

They saw it was either him or them. They had to repent or they had to kill this one who claimed to be the sent one from God. And they said, we'll get rid of him, and that'll be the last of him, and we'll still look for him who will be our Messiah.

But you know, a miracle took place. God raised him from the dead, and when he raised him from the dead, his claims were right backstabbing these Pharisees and leaders in the faith. And God in force got Christ's claims by raising him from the dead, and declared him to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.

Oh, my, the rejected Christ! You know, it wasn't a question of these Jews not knowing that if they accepted one, they'd have to bow down to him and come under his yoke. They said, we're just not going to accept this one. We'll accept the true Messiah when he comes.

And so they go ahead today, still looking for him who has already come. But I'd ten million times rather be in their shoes, blinded as they are, than be the shoes of a Church member that claims that he has accepted this Christ and has never bowed in obedience to his Lordship. For I say to you that Christ is either the rejected or the accepted Christ.

And thank God even then, among a nation of Christ-rejecters, there was a remnant of Christ-accepters. When the disciples owned him in Matthew 16 as the one they'd been looking for, the expected Messiah, they owned him as their King and their absolute Lord. And also they came to see that they owned him as their rejected Lord.

For my Lord understood what it meant to receive him, the rejected one. It meant for them a cross. And so he says to them right after, they told him who they believe he is, that if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

And thus it means, if you are a Christian now, that you've accepted not only the expected Christ, but the one who didn't meet the expectations of the people of that day, and thus became the rejected Christ. And so the confession of the Lord Jesus Christ today must be as revolutionary now as it was then. The expected Christ, the one prophesied in the Old Testament, and the one whose credentials proven to be the one this Old Testament talks about, and yet he hung on a cross outside the very religious city of Jerusalem, the expected Christ, the prophesied Christ, must rule over us entirely.

And the rejected Christ, the one this world rejects, must be followed in self-denial and in full obedience to his absolute authority. And anything that falls short of that is a mockery of what salvation is. You know, my friends, there's no middle ground in this business.

It's either black or white, it's not gray. It's either black or white, you either have accepted this rejected Christ and taken up the cross and are living a life of denying of yourself and following him, all out for him, or you haven't at all. It's Christ must be all in all, or he'll not be Lord at all.

There's absolutely no middle ground. You know, I say it with a sob in my heart, that our preaching today borders mightily closely to preaching another Jesus. The Apostle Paul warned of that in his days, and I've been going up and down America for years now, saying that we are mighty, mighty close to preaching not the expected Christ of the Old Testament prophecies, not the rejected Christ of the Jewish nation of his day, and not the accepted Christ of the early Christians.

But we've been preaching another Jesus and another gospel, and I've had to pay a little price for this. Oh, I wonder if I'm right. I wonder if in the popular preaching of the gospel today, as we call it, everybody talks about accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and nobody much says anything about surrendering to Christ, absolute authority in your everyday living.

I wonder if we haven't got another Jesus, this one we've separated, his Saviorhood from his Lordship. And I hear it preached now that we are saved if we accept Jesus as our Savior. When I come and stand and say, the scriptures don't talk like that, people say, I'm not preaching the gospel.

Oh, my soul, you mean to tell me that Jesus, the Old Testament prophesied, was prophesied just as somebody to keep you from going to hell? No, sir. It is prophesied of him that he'd have the voice of authority. It is prophesied of him that he'd sit on an eternal throne, and that he then and the nations had been given him as an inheritance and a possession.

It is prophesied of him that he would so rule that every knee, Isaiah says, should bow and every tongue confess. And Paul quotes that. Where is this Jesus, the expected Jesus of the Old Testament, the rejected Jesus of the New Testament, and the accepted Jesus of men and women who know who he is by revelation? I say to you, they've taken away our Lord, and we know not where to find him.

And this half-Jesus that will save you and leave you with your pride and your old will never having been bent and doing as you please and making his lordship optional and dividing salvation and discipleship and justification and sanctification, I say to you that that Jesus is another Jesus. The only Jesus the word of God talks about before he comes in the Old Testament, as it announces his arrival in the gospel and as the old preachers told the significance of his life and his death and resurrection and present reign in the epistle, he is the one who has thrown rights in our lives every day. And I tell you to accept him as Savior without facing the fact that he speaks with authority and that his sheep hear his voice and that he rules them and that they'll not listen to another fellow's voice.

I tell you to do that, is that the peril of your soul? Who you say Jesus is? The Old Testament said he'd be the absolute Lord. The Jews turned him down because they didn't want him to rule over them. What about you? What about you? Do you confess him as Christ? Do you confess him as Lord? Do you obey his commands? Listen to the plaintive cry of my Lord Jesus, why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say.

Jesus of the Bible is the Lord of all. Who you say he is? Who do you say he is? May God help you to answer that rightly in daily living. My time is up.

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