



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Matthew 16:3

"The God-man, or the Person of the Savior"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now for this morning Matthew chapter 16 and the 13th verse.

"When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets.' He saith unto them, 'But whom say ye that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.' And Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Blessed art Thou Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"

Now, I'm asking you if you will to turn over to the 10th chapter of the Gospel of Mark. Mark chapter 10 and let me read a few verses beginning with the 17th verse. Mark chapter 10 and verse 17.

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.' And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."

May God bless the reading of his word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Our gracious God and heavenly Father we thank Thee for the greatness of the Son of God. And we thank Thee for these incidents which have occurred in his life which have given us such a plain indication of the superior station that he enjoys with reference to men. We thank Thee that he is one of us but that he also more than one of us. We thank Thee that he is man and we thank Thee that he possesses divine nature. And Father we thank Thee for the privilege of meeting in his name; the man of Thine own choosing. And we thank Thee for the salvation that has come to us through him. And O Father, we pray that if there by one person in this auditorium who has not yet believed in Jesus Christ, he does not know yet the joy of sins forgiven through the finished work of Jesus Christ, the joy of full and complete acceptance in him before Thee, may the Holy Spirit today as we proclaim him move in and win them by the love of Christ and the grace of God to a saving relationship to him.

And so Lord we pray that the ministry of the Spirit, that without which we can do nothing, may be effective in our meeting. We pray for the young people who are here, the

children. We pray that their hearts may be open to understand the greatness of Christ. And may they turn to him and trust him as their Savior. And for those who may have come in having walked many years upon this earth but who do not yet know the grace of God, may today be the day when that tremendous transaction takes place.

We know, Lord, that Thy hand is over each one of our lives. We thank Thee that we belong to him. And O Father, we pray that the sheep who have not yet come to him may come to him today in Thy will.

We pray especially for this country and its leadership in these very critical days. Father we pray that Thou wilt guide and direct in Washington and in the capitals of this earth. Above all we pray that the ministry of the word of God may go forth today in freedom and in power. And Lord, we pray for some who are unable to be with us. We pray that Thou wilt minister to them and draw them closer to Thyself. Heal the sick. And comfort the afflicted as Thou dost desire. And so we commit our service to Thee. We commit this company of believers to Thee and we pray that Thou wilt guide and direct us, and make us a witness in humility and yet in the power of God to others. For Christ's sake. Amen.

[Message] Today the subject for the morning message is "The God-man" or "The Person of the Savior." One thing that becomes very evident to us as we read the Bible is this: that the person of Jesus Christ is very significant in the evaluation of the work of Jesus Christ. And the work of Jesus Christ becomes significant in so far as we understand the nature of the person who has performed it. Therefore, it is extremely important for us to be able to answer the question, "Who was Jesus Christ?" in a clear, and forthright and accurate way.

In California about a week ago there was called to my attention a rendering, and then I noticed several other renderings in one of our most popular new translations of the New Testament. It was a rendering of Philippians chapter 2 and verse 6. In which in this particular version, and two million copies of this New Testament have been printed and

are being circulated at a cost of twenty-five cents with great publicity, that there is a denial in this particular version in the translation of Philippians 2:6 of the deity of Jesus Christ. And there was placed in my hand some correspondence which was carried on with one of the leading lights in the American Bible society. And this was very disturbing to me because the American Bible Society had been so useful in the propagation of the word of God and still is. But in the course of the correspondence this gentleman who is responsible for the approval of translations made the statement that Jesus Christ nowhere claimed to be God.

Now, of course, there are many many things that we can say about this statement. It is very very true as you read the New Testament that Jesus Christ did not go around saying, "I am God." In fact, it is very difficult to find a place in which he plainly states, "I am God." That might well be true, that he nowhere says, "I am God." But if there is anything that is true it is that Jesus Christ regarded himself as God, that he regarded himself as the Son of God and that in regarding himself as the Son of God he regarded himself as God. And not only did he regard himself as Son of God and hence possessed of God's nature so that he carried God's nature around with him. But the others too who did not accept his claim to deity nevertheless acknowledged that in the term Son of God there is the implicit claim for deity.

Now, I took this translation because I saw this for the first time. A woman put it in my hands who is leading Bible teacher in church out on the west coast, and a very keen woman. She put it in my hands and she put the correspondence and my hands. And I read the correspondence and then I took the New Testament version and I begin to look at some other key passages in it. And I was startled to discover that this was not the only verse in the version which was mistranslated. And that has interested me quite a bit in the days that have followed since then.

The question, "Who was Jesus Christ?" is so fundamental that it is my desire that everyone who is in Believers Chapel, at least, should have a clear understand of what the Bible says

about the person of Jesus Christ. And so I want to try to ask and answer the question this morning, "Who was Jesus Christ?" This is not a new question. It was asked by our Lord himself. "Whom do men say that I the son of man am?" "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, some Elijah, some Jeremiah." These answers, of course, give us interesting incites into the effect that Jesus produced upon the men of his day. But finally, our Lord turned to the apostles and said more specifically and intimately to them, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Peter, by the revelation of God the father said, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Later our Lord asks the question again of the Pharisees. He says, "What think ye of the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They said, "David's son." He said, "Well then if he was David's son, why does David call him his Lord?" In other words, he was plainly trying to point them to the fact that he not only was David's son but he was also God's son. And since he was God's son it was the place of David to call him Lord and worship him. Men have recognized who have not been spiritual that there was something unusual about Jesus Christ.

Philip Schaff, one of our great historians, has said, "The life and character of Jesus Christ is the holy of holies in the history of the world." H.G. Wells once wrote an article on the three greatest men of history. And in the midst of this article he asked the rhetorical question judged by a historian standard, "Where does Jesus stand among men?" And then he answered I and said, "By this test Jesus stands first."

Now, if you read our history books you discover, of course, that while men acknowledge that Jesus Christ is a great man, they generally give him about a half a paragraph, or a paragraph or perhaps a page. Now, this is very startling thing that we can have page after page about Julius Caesar and just a little paragraph or so about Jesus Christ. And if you've ever noticed in our history books the kind of picture that is given of Jesus? A pale, anemic, pallid kind of person who couldn't possibly have made any impression on the

world at all if he was the kind of person presented in our history books. It is a testimony, of course, to the nature of man, which has rejected Jesus Christ.

Now, if you want to know someone the best way to know someone is to ask those who are closest to the person. If you want to know me you don't ask someone who does not know me. You might ask my mother. You might ask my father about me. You might ask my brothers and my sisters, and you would learn far more about me than you would if you asked someone who did not know me. If you wanted to know me best then, if she were honest, you should ask my wife. [Laughter] but don't do it. [Laughter] So if you want to know someone you should go to those who are closest to that person. And that's what we're going to do. We're going to now take a few passages and look at them. And they are primarily passages that were written by men who knew Jesus Christ. But in order to cover the Old as well as the New Testaments I want you to turn with me first of all to the Book Of Isaiah. And let's read just a verse or two, and then read the New Testament citation of it in Matthew chapter 1.

Isaiah chapter 7. And let's read beginning at the 14th verse. Now, these passages from Holy Scripture will, I think, set forth very plainly the fact that Jesus Christ is more than a man. Verse 14. "Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call him name Emmanuel."

Now, last Sunday night I was speaking to the believers who were at the Lord's table and trying to point out to them this, that the word name in Hebrew does not mean what it means today. A man's name today is his moniker. It's the thing which we know him by. It's his legal designation, but it has no reference whatsoever to his character. I think, as I told them, that the name Lewis means "a mighty warrior", but it has no reference whatsoever to my character. I assure you of that. [Laughter]

But in ancient days the name was expressive of the character of the person. And so when you speak of the name of God you are not speaking of three letters by which we know him. You are speaking of what he is. Now, this is illustrated here because you see Jesus

Christ was never given the moniker Emmanuel. No one ever called him Mr. Emmanuel. No one ever called him Emmanuel by itself. You see, when the prophet said his name shall be called Emmanuel he was not saying that someone would go around saying, "Oh, Emmanuel, come over here. Where are you Emmanuel?" But he was saying that his, his character shall be called this. This is the word that describes him in his basic nature. No, Emanu-El means in Hebrew "God is with us". Emmanuel. So when the prophet says that this one born of a virgin shall be called by the name Emmanuel he's saying, "He shall be God in the midst of us though born of a virgin."

Now, let's turn to the New Testament and read Matthew chapter 1. And this is written, you'll remember, by a man who was a close associate of Emanu-El or Emmanuel. Now, he describes his birth and he said he was born of the holy ghost. And in verse 22 of Matthew chapter 1 the apostle writes, "Now, all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet. Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call him name Emmanuel," which being interpreted is God with us. So if the Apostle Matthew were with us today and I were to turn to him, if he were with us I wouldn't be preaching. [Laughter] but nevertheless, if he were here in the audience and I should discover him and I should say, "Mr. Matthew, would you tell us what you think of Jesus Christ?" He would stand up immediately and say, "He was born of the Holy Ghost and his name, and his character is Emmanuel. He is God with us."

Oh but Mr. Matthew, we never read in the New Testament that Jesus said that he was God. He would probably say, "Poppycock," in Aramaic or Hebrew. [Laughter] And he would remind us that there is much more to Jesus Christ than the mere words that are stated in our New Testament, and he would tell us about what he did. And he would tell us what it means to be born of a virgin and he would tell us what it means to be the Son of God. And we would slink out if we were believers believing in the deity of Jesus Christ.

Let's turn onto listen of the testimony of another apostle. John chapter 1 and verse 1. Now, this is the man who leaned on Jesus' bosom. You could never ask our Lord's wife what he was like for he never had a wife. But he did have some apostles who lived with him and some who were very very intimate with him. And one of them was John the apostle. And this is what he writes years after he has had time to rethink all of the things that he had experienced in his early days. And he says and old man with his flowing white hair, having reflected fully upon the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth he says, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God." "And the word became flesh," he says in the 14th verse, "and tabernacled among us." If John were here and we were to ask him who Jesus Christ was he would stand up immediately and say, "The word who tabernacled among us. The word was God." Now, this is not the only testimony we have in the New Testament. Let's turn to the 10th chapter and the 30th verse and listen to something that Jesus himself has said. Chapter 10 verse 29 reads -- while you are finding the 30th -- "My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." Now, you might think that this text, if you looked at it, said, "I and my Father are one person." It does not say that. It really says, "I and my Father are one thing." The one is neuter in gender. It is as if he were saying, "I am my Father posses the same substance." If God is God, the son is God. And it is the voice of Jesus himself, "I and my Father are one." Let's turn to another passage.

Philippians chapter 2 and verse 6. Now, there are many things about the Authorized Version that could stand improvement. There are some things that do not need to be improved. The 6th verse reads, Philippians chapter 2, "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God." "Who being in the form of God," that philosophical term form means that he possesses the essential attributes. "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God." By the way, in the Greek text again it is equal things with God, as if he possesses all of the essential attributes of

deity. Now, if you possess all of the essential attributes of God that means that you possess deity. The Christian doctrine of the trinity was not something that they thought up last Saturday night. The Christian doctrine of the trinity was a doctrine that was formed over centuries of thought upon the word of God. And it's not surprising that as they reflected upon Scripture and the testimony of our Lord through the apostles that they came to believe that Jesus Christ was God, and they express it.

Let's turn to another passage in the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the passage in the book that we wish to expound next month beginning with the 10th or 11th of March. Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 7, "'And of the angels,' he saith, 'who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire, but unto the son,' he saith, 'Thy throne O God is forever and ever. A septure of righteousness is the septure of Thy kingdom.'"

Now, I think it is evident that from these few texts that I have read, and I have not tried to read all that could be read, that there is a plain testimony to the fact that Jesus Christ is God in the New Testament. In fact, I think that as we read the New Testament is it obvious that we are faced with a dilemma. Either Jesus Christ is undiminished deity or else he is a deceiver who consciously went out and confused the minds of men to gather a following about him. Or he was deceived himself, a megalomaniac.

C.S. Lewis says the kind of man who says that he's a poached egg, a man afflicted with phony *de gradeur*, a man who thought he was great but who was not, and we are faced with that dilemma as we think about Jesus Christ. Of course, those who know him and know what he has done for them are not in any doubt about the solution for that dilemma. It is that Jesus Christ possesses undiminished deity.

Now, in the letter that I read in correspondence one of the men referred to a text, which has often been used by unbelievers in the deity of Christ to refute this. He referred to the fact that Jesus himself said that the Father was greater than he. And so I want you to turn to that passage. It's in John chapter 14 and verse 28. And it's here, John chapter 14 and verse 28. Now, Jesus says in the Upper Room Discourse, "Ye have heard how I said unto

you, 'I go away and come again unto you. If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father. For my Father is greater than I." Now, how is it possible for Jesus Christ to be God and yet the Father greater than he? Now, many have stumbled over this and not surprisingly. Let's just remember this, that it is possible for us to have absolutely equality and relative inequality. These two conditions are not incompatible. For example let me illustrate. Let's suppose that we have a business firm in which three men who are brothers -- let's just say for the sake of the illustration that they are triplets, born of the same parents, having the same nature, the same environment, possessing the same interest in the business, each owns thirty-three and one-third percent of the capital stock of the company. They are absolutely equal in ownership, in nature, but let's suppose for the sake of the operation of the business it is decided that one of them will be the president, another will be the sales manager, still another will be the superintendent of the plant, which is responsible for the manufacture of the product.

Now, there is absolute equality but relative inequality for the sake of functions. Now, if you were to meet the president on the street and say, "You've been doing a wonderful job for me in making this particular item, and now I'd like for you to modify it in this way." And then you real off a few technical expressions to him. He might throw up his hands and say, "I'm awfully sorry, but I don't know anything about that. When it comes to that my brother is greater than I." And so he would turn it over to his brother. They are absolutely equal but they are relatively unequal. Now the same thing is true in our Lord's relationship to the Father during the days of his earthly ministry. He was absolutely equal with God, possessed the same nature as God, but for a time he became relatively unequal in order to carry out the will of the Father.

Now, you'll notice in the Bible is the kind of book that you have to be very careful in reading for every word has an important significance. Jesus did not say in verse 28, "If ye loved me ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father for my God is greater than I." He said, "My Father is greater than I." In other words, he speaks out of the

relationship that he enjoys with the Father. Father, Son, Spirit. And because God the Father is Father he is the one who initiates the program of redemption. Because God the Son is the son, he is the one who is dependent upon the Father in order to carry out the Father's will here. And so when he says, "My Father is greater than I," he is not denying the fact that God the Father and he possessed the same nature. But during his earthly mediatorial ministry he is subordinate to the Father in carrying out his will.

Now, I also read a passage in which Jesus said, "Why callest Thou me good to the rich young ruler? There is none good but one. That is God." But you see, this man had come to or Lord and had called him Rabbi or teacher. Now, when a man looks at Jesus as teacher and adds the adjective good, which belongs only to God, our Lord must be careful to quiz him about his theology. And so he said, "Why callest Thou me good? Why did you put that adjective before teacher? There is one good, that is God." You can only put the adjective good with the one who is God. Now, if had replied, "Oh, but Lord Thou art God," Jesus would have turned to the crowds about him and said, "I have not found so great faith. No, not in all of Israel." But he didn't know that.

And you remember the Emperor Joseph II used to go out over his territories in disguise in order to find out what his people thought of him. They didn't have the privilege of television and the pictures and communications that we have today. And so they didn't know how he looked. He disguised himself and he would say, "What do you think about the emperor." And he would listen to what they had to say. He wanted to find out how they regarded him. Now, if one of his subjects were to reveal state secrets to him not knowing that he was the king or emperor, then he should be judged guilty of treason because even though he's the king this man didn't know it. And so since he did not know it, it is illegal to divulge state secrets to him. This man does not recognize that Jesus Christ is God. And so taking an adjective that belongs only to God he attaches it to Rabbi or teacher. And thus our Lord says, "Do not use the adjective good except with

God." It is not a denial of his deity when he says, "Why callest Thou me good? There is one good. That is God." He was trying to bring this man up to faith in himself as God. I am sometimes very distressed with people who read the New Testament so superficially. This is the book of God and because it is the book of God it demands the closest and most intense type of study. Any kind of superficial reading of it is going to lead you into error inevitably.

Now, I think that we have established the fact that Jesus Christ is God. And I think that we can establish, as we consider every objection, that there is a rational basis, a clear basis for understanding those texts. Was he man? You know, the early church did not have to face the problem of the deity of Christ so much as they had to face the problem of the humanity of Christ. Jesus had left such a great impression on the world of his day that those who responded at all to him did not have any problem with his deity. They wondered if he was really one of us. And so the docetic heresy was something that the early church had to fight with all of its vigor because men knew Jesus and knew what he had done so well that they just wondered if wasn't God only and it just had seemed as if he were here as a man. So the New Testament lays a great deal of stress upon the necessity for believing in the true incarnation of the Son of God. John says, "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us." A new form of existence, but not a new existence. When the babe was in the manger in Bethlehem, as I've said so often to you, he was no newcomer to this human scene. He is the eternal God.

In John chapter 8 and verse 40 the Lord Jesus speaking to the Jews of his day says, "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that had told you the truth which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham, a man." So he's man.

Now, to save time I want you to turn with me to a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews chapter 2. And let's just read a few verses because I think it is evident from these verses that the New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ was man. We do not have this problem

so much today because most are willing to grant that he was man. It is his deity that is the question. But verse 14 reads,

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that has the power of death, that is, the devil. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore, in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his bretheren (in all things to be made like unto his bretheren)."

"Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood he also himself likewise took part of the same." There is no question but that Jesus Christ is man. Now, what is this resultant person who is God on the one hand and man on the other. We do not have man indwelling a man only. That you see in any Christian. For every Christian is a believer in whom God dwells. But Jesus Christ is just not God indwelling a man. He is not man who has been brought up to the level of deity by some mighty act of God. He is not man deified. He is the God-man; one person who possesses two natures. Not God in a man, not God and man, but the God-man. One person who possesses two natures; one divine, one human.

The thirty-nine articles of the Anglican Church have expressed this, I think, as well as it can be expressed. He entered into manhood "in the womb of the blessed virgin of her substance so that two whole and perfect natures were found together never to be divided." Two whole and perfect natures were found together in one person never to be divided. But Dr. Johnson, how is it possible for me to understand Jesus Christ the God man? I didn't ask you to understand it. God does not ask us to understand it. The very fact that we cannot understand it is one of the evidences that it is something that has

come from God. If you could understand that person of Jesus Christ completely you would be God. The very insolubility of the person of Christ is an evidence of his deity. We know, for example, in human things that the imagination can only rearrange known facts. When we try to think of something like a God-man what do we come up with? Well, we come up with a centaur, a combination of horse and a man, or a fawn, or a mermaid; part fish and part woman. But these are grotesque absurdities. In fact, they are impossibilities. It is impossible for a man to be united with a horse. Now the centaurs were supposed to have run about the plains of Thessally. But can you imagine the four legs of a horse uniting to the four arms of a man? The shoulders? Why it would require a double set of bones, and tendons and everything else. It's a grotesque absurdity. But that's the kind of thing we blunder into when we try to think up something like the God-man. The very fact that Jesus Christ is the God-man and we cannot understand it is one of the evidences that it must be of God.

Now why, Dr. Johnson, is all of this so important? If I were here just to give you a theological lecture well then I would hope that all of you are sleeping instead of the three that I notice. [Laughter] because it is relatively unimportant if this is only a theological thing, but there is far more involved in this than theology. You see actually everything is involved in this.

Many years ago I read one of G. Campbell Morgan's greatest books. It is called *The Crisis of the Christ*. I will never forget what he said about man's need. He said man's need is three-fold. Man is distanced from God by sin. Man is ignorant of God through sin. Man is unlike God in sin. Distant from God, ignorant of God, unlike God. Now, of course, if this is our condition then I think we can understand why the God-man came and lived among us. For you see, as Job said in the 9th chapter of the Book of Job, "There is no man who can lay his hand upon us, who can be the mediator." Job says in verse 32, "For he, God, is not a man as I am that I should answer him, that we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any dazed man betwixt us that might lay his

hand upon us both." There is no man who can lay his upon God and we do not know of any God who has come down to live among us who can put his hand upon man. There is no one who can unite God with men.

Now, Job of course goes onto speak about his hope. He speaks about the redeemer that he thinks is going to come and that is going to stand upon this earth. But Job did not have wonderful experience of seeing with eyes of flesh that God-man. But there came a time when God sent forth the Son of God from heaven and this God came down to dwell in our midst. And when men believed in him they found themselves with God, and God in this man found himself with men. And finally, the day of the cross came when the God-man hung upon the cross there crying out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" For you see, the God had come from heaven taking human nature upon him and in his human nature had born all of the judgment of all men who dwell with human nature. And there bearing all of the judgment of God, all of the penalty for sin inflicted upon him, now this holy righteous just God is free - free legally, free by justice to give salvation to all who will believe in him. Because we have a God-man, God who is able to bear sins, a human nature able to identify with us. So when I come and I believe in Jesus Christ who loved me and gave himself for me I come to God because God is in him. And when I come to him I come to God. And God comes to me in Jesus Christ. This is why all of this has taken place. It's why we have a God-man who is a redeemer. It's why it is so important. It is why it is something that we must contend for with all of our strength as long as we live, that Jesus Christ is the God-man; the redeemer, the one who is able to be our substitute but who because he is God is able to save us.

When we talk about the deity of Christ, as Forsyth said so many years ago and so well. The deity of Christ is simply the theological expression of the evangelical experience of conversion. No man can save me. God alone can save me, and I have been saved. I know by my salvation apart from the word that this man is God. And so in

Christ I find that though I was distanced from God by sin I'm near him in righteousness. I discover that though I was ignorant of God through sin, I now know God and know him in holiness. And I finally that though I was unlike God in my sin, now through Jesus Christ I'm on the way to becoming like him in all of the purity of the Son of God.

Job's dazed man has been found. There is a man who can put his hand upon God and who can put his hand upon us, a God-man. Now, you can see this in our Lord's ministry so wonderfully. It's amazing that we cannot sense it. We see him standing before the tomb of Lazarus and one moment we look at the text of Scripture and we read, "Jesus sobbed." There's the man. The next moment we read, "Lazarus, come forth." And by jove, as an Englishman would say, he came forth. He did. That's the God. Or we hear him saying in John chapter 10 and verse 18, "No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down." That's the man. "And I have power to take it again." Who can say that? Only God.

I think one of the most touching incidents in all the Bible is in the 8th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew when a leper came to the Lord Jesus. And the leper said to him, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." You see, he didn't question the power of Jesus Christ. He questioned his love. And then have you ever seen a leper? A leper the vilest kind of person that you'll ever hope to set your eyes upon. Jesus does not have to touch a man to heal him. Jesus may speak the word and the leprosy shall flee. Jesus may speak the word and the nobleman's son is healed. Jesus may say the word and Lazarus comes forth from the grave. But Matthew says that Jesus put forth his hand and touched him. Why did he do that? Because you see, this man did not question his power. He questioned his love. And we learn from this wonderful act of our Lord that there is a love back of his power because though he is God he is also man. "He saw me ruined in the fall, yet loved me not with standing all," we sing. "He put forth his hand and he cleansed him." He said, "I will be Thou clean."

I'm so thankful that Jesus Christ is man. He loves me. He can take care of my needs, and he's sympathetic with them. And he's God and he has all of the power of deity. And I can come to him and expect him to deliver me. And Jesus asked the first question. He said, "Whom do men say that I the son of man am?" And the finally he said, "Whom do ye say that I am?" And Peter answered for them. Those who were closets the Savior and the scene affirmed their radiant and life-giving faith in him. And those who know him best know him as the Son of God and God.

J.B. Phillips, in one of his books, says something that is very significant. He says that you can never know the salvation that God has offered us until you're willing to trust him. He said it's like love. You can never know what love is until you fall in love. You can never really know what love is until you take the plunge. Did you know when you fall in love that's just a beginning?

I was speaking with a fine young man just the other night who is getting married. And asked him did he love his fiancé. He said, "Yes, I do love her. But I think it's also the beginning of our life, too." And how right he was. Because you see, when you fall in love it is the beginning, and the more you get to know the person you love the more you love them. Don't you? Some of you seem doubtful about it. [Laughter] I assure you that it is. And so the very fact that you have not yet taken the plunge and put your trust in Jesus Christ, and you have not fallen in love with him makes you disqualified so far as understanding his love is concerned. If any man will do his will he shall know the doctrine whether I speak of myself or not.

What's your relationship to Jesus Christ? Whom say ye that he is? We invite you this morning to put your trust in him who is the God-man. He loves you with the heart of a sympathetic man, the perfect man. But he also has at his disposal all of the power of infinite deity. And the moment that you speak the word in your heart, "Thank you Lord for dying for me," that moment you become a new man in Christ. What a tremendous thing it is to know the God-man. May God help you to make that decision.

I was so thrilled this past week. Someone called me up on the phone and said we had talked together once before. And he said, "I just wanted to let you know that after our conversation I have made that decision." May God speak to your heart, too. Let's stand together for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the God-man who loved us and has given himself for us, and who is not a fact of ancient history but who lives at this moment at the right hand of the Father and who is coming again. And O God, we pray that in this audience if there is one person young or old who has not yet personally trusted Christ, may they turn...

[RECORDING ENDED ABRUPTLY]