March 31, 2024

Sermon 28

Mark 8:22-30

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 Happy Easter, Red Oak! He is Risen! I feel like we could just read another passage and go home, right now. That was an incredible Lord’s Supper. We are going to be in Mark 8:22-30, tonight, and before we dive into that passage together, I want to share something with you guys that really has been just boggling my mind for the better part of 2024.

 I want you to think about this statement: Jesus is no slack Savior and no lazy Lord. Jesus is no slack Savior and no lazy Lord. I’ve been walking with Jesus for about twenty years now, and for the vast majority of that time I’ve been focusing a lot on Jesus’ miraculous birth, His perfect life, and His sacrificial death on the cross – which I should. That’s very important. All of those things are critical to the Christian faith. The fact that the Son of God would die in the flesh is astonishing. What’s more amazing is that He could live the life that I could never live. He would live perfectly in the will of the Father. And He did not deserve to die, because He was sinless, but He would willingly lay down His perfect life. He would absorb the wrath of God for my sin on the cross. To think about this, I needed to be saved from God’s wrath. I needed to save from God’s wrath over my sin, personally. Me, Joseph. God provided a Savior to rescue me from punishment that I deserved because I was rebellious, because I am rebellious.

That blows my mind to think about that, to think that Jesus was no slack Savior; that when He came into Earth there was not one moment that He was like, “Man, I’m going to sleep in today. I’m not going to go to work. I don’t feel like discipling today.” No, He was resolved to do what the Father sent Him to do. He was resolved to redeem His people. He set His face to do it. He wasn’t going to turn to the right or to the left. He was going to do it. He was going to follow through. He always took the initiative first. He always acted first. And He always acted completely and fully. And we know that He finished the work on the cross. He accomplished the mission the Father sent Him to accomplish. And here it is – here’s what’s been blowing my mind: He wasn’t done. He wasn’t done working. I’ve always thought how that when Jesus said, “It is finished,” that it was done. His work was done when He died on the cross. But then, we know, and what we celebrate today, is that He rose from the grave. We just got done hearing about the resurrection, and the implications for the resurrection right now for our lives. But He rose from the grave, and the Scriptures say that He always lives to intercede for us. This is crazy – not only was He not a slack Savior but He’s not a lazy Lord right now. I think this is what’s been blowing my mind. I’ve had this picture in my head of Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Father in a La-Z-Boy, kicking back, and just sipping on a drink. And that’s wrong. That’s not the picture of our Lord. That’s not what He’s doing. That’s an inaccurate picture of Christ right now. He is no slack Savior. When He was on the Earth, He wasn’t one, and right now, He is reigning but He’s not lazy. He’s not a lazy Lord. He deserves my full submission, my surrender. He’s not lazy, meaning He’s always interceding for us. He is our Mediator. He’s praying for us, always. He’s standing in the gap between us and the Father. His blood speaks a better word, today, and He always lives. He’s alive and He’s not lazy.

I was just overcome by this. I was praising God for sending Jesus. I was thanking Jesus for not being slack, because I’m so prone to being slack. I was praising Him for not being lazy, because I’m so prone to being lazy. And I was thanking Him for ever living to intercede for us because I need that. I need Him to be a Savior for me, but I also need for Him to be my Lord.

In our passage tonight, we see the apex, if you will, of Mark’s gospel. We’ve been on this journey together, climbing up this mountain, and Mark has been leading us to this very point, tonight, which is where we learn the answer to the question, “Who is Jesus?”

You’ll see the chart on the screen (chart unavailable). I hope it shows up. It doesn’t show apex; there’s no mountaintop. But you can see, from the very beginning of the Gospel of Mark, we’ve seen that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This is the Gospel. Then, the first 8 chapters we’ve been hearing about this Gospel and who Jesus is; His authority over demons, His authority over nature, over the supernatural, and then we come to this interaction tonight, where Jesus says, “Who do people say that I am?” but then He points to His disciples and makes it personal, and says, “Who do you say that I am?” Where Peter – obviously, He’s going to answer first – says, “The Christ. You’re the Christ.” So, this is the apex of the Gospel of Mark, and while we are going to get to that amazing question, “Who do you say that I am?” there’s this unique miracle-interaction encounter before we get there. So, we’re going to explore that for a moment.

Let’s pray, and then we are going to read in Mark 8.

*Father, we praise you for this day. We praise you for this Easter weekend. Remembering Good Friday, remembering your death, your burial, and your resurrection – Jesus, we praise you because you are exalted. You knew what was going to happen and you still did it. You died, and yet you are alive and well, right now. We exalt you, Jesus, because there is no one like you. We ask you, Holy Spirit, to speak through your Word, tonight. We ask you to direct our hearts and our minds to you, Jesus; to reorient our hearts and our minds to you, that we might walk away here tonight in a posture of worship, repentance, and faith, knowing who you are, getting a better snapshot. I pray that you would open up our eyes to see you. It’s in Jesus name we pray, Amen.*

This is God’s Word, starting in Mark 8:22. It says,

*22And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him. 23And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?” 24And he looked up and said, “I see people, but they look like trees, walking.” 25Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26And he sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.” 27And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?”*

*28And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” 29And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” 30And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.*

We’re going to look at this passage in two sections. We’re going to break it down in verses 22-26 and verses 27-30. In the first part here, Mark gives us another geographical pointer. You’ve seen this map before, right?

If you look at the top of the map, there’s going to be the northeasternmost point of the Sea of Galilee. This would be a mixture of Jewish-Gentile territory, right up there. So, this is where Jesus currently is with His disciples. Verse 22 might seem somewhat short, small, and insignificant, but it contains so much. So, I want us to look at it in detail. It says,

*And some people brought to him a blind man and begged him to touch him.*

So, like any good story, we’re introduced to some characters and to a problem. The problem is that there is a man who is blind. He is unable to see. Now, we don’t know whether it’s because of an injury, a disease, a congenital condition. We aren’t told, specifically. We just know he’s blind. What I don’t want us to miss is that this blind man is representative of all mankind apart from God’s grace in Christ. We are all born spiritually blind. We’re all born outside of Christ, and only Christ can reverse this. In fact, we’re not only born blind, we’re born blind, deaf, dumb, and dead, and only Jesus can change that.

In Matthew 11, John the Baptist is near the end of His life. He’s in prison, and he’s just curious if Jesus is indeed the Christ, “Are you the One we’ve been waiting on? I’ve got to know.” So, he sends some disciples, and Matthew records it.

*Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” 4And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.*

Blind see, lame walk, deaf hear, unclean cleansed, dead raised. Only God, only God’s Son, only Jesus Christ can do these things. And some believe. In Mark 8:22, the other characters are unnamed people. Do you see them? Look at verse 22. “Some people,” that’s what it says. “Some people.” These people are taking action. They’re operating out of faith. These people brought this blind man to Jesus because they believed Jesus could do something for him. They knew Jesus had the power, and their faith moved them into action. That word, “brought,” literally means “to carry,” “to bear,” “to move.” And that word, “begged,” in the Greek, is parakaleō , which means “to call for,” “to implore,” or “to make earnest supplication.” So, in other words, these people are praying for their friend and they’re bringing him to Jesus with sincere conviction. They want Jesus to touch him; they believe He can heal him.

I want you to not miss this fact. A lot of times we can look over things that aren’t there. You’ll say, “Joseph, I didn’t read that. It’s not there.” What’s not in verse 22? The blind man doesn’t ask for anything. The blind man doesn’t say anything. Right? So, what’s Jesus going to do? Look at verse 23.

*23 And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?”*

In verse 22, the people are acting. Verse 23 is Jesus responding, moved by the prayers of the people. We learn so much about Jesus in this encounter. We see His compassion, His gentleness, His care, His lovingkindness. And just like the deaf and mute man back in chapter 7, Jesus takes this man aside. It actually says that Jesus led Him out of the village. Now, why would He do that? Jesus took this man away from the crowds to have a one-on-one, personal encounter. This is the Creator engaging His creation. This is a sensitive heart that Jesus has. And notice that Jesus isn’t being flashy. He’s not doing miracles for show.

I want you to imagine what’s going on inside of this man’s head. This blind man doesn’t know Jesus. He was brought by his friends. His friends are begging for him. He is not. This man is literally at the mercy of Jesus. He’s in Jesus’ hand. All he can do is trust and anticipate. He’s being led away from the noise to be alone with Jesus, and since he was blind, his other senses had to be heightened. Since he was blind, his sense of hearing, his sense of feeling, were on high alert. But Jesus does something very odd. You’re probably like, “Are we going to talk about this or not?” because it’s pretty weird; Jesus spit in his face. Let’s be honest, that’s just gross. Jesus spit in His face. It’s pretty weird, but He does it. This is recorded in Mark 7:33, in Mark 8:23, right here in this passage, and in John 9:6. It’s recorded in three places in the Scriptures that Jesus spit on somebody. Every time that it is recorded, He does it for a specific reason. It’s a one-on-one, personal, healing miracle for an individual. And this blind man – I want you to think about this – he couldn’t see what was coming, like we would if somebody spit in our face. He couldn’t see what was coming, but he could hear it and he could feel it. Right? So, Jesus is communicating without using words, what He’s about to do for this man.

Now, this was a predominantly Gentile area. So, this Gentile man could have expected nothing from this Jewish rabbi. He doesn’t plead like the other blind men that we see in Scriptures. Some blind men in Matthew’s gospel, what do they do? They shout out, “Son of David! Have mercy on me!” They express their faith by calling Jesus this messianic title. They were expecting a Christ. This blind, Gentile man, was not. This blind man doesn’t beg. He doesn’t say, “Oh, Lord! I need you! I need your grace!” But what grace does Jesus demonstrate toward him? Amazing grace. Look at verses 24-25,

*24And he looked up and said, “I see people, but they look like trees, walking.”*

This man says, “Something’s changed. I couldn’t see anything, but I do see something,” and what he sees isn’t very clear. His sight isn’t fully restored, it’s not completely there yet. It’s hazy. It’s blurry. This man is like the disciples in their spiritual sight. They see Jesus, they’ve been walking with Jesus, they’ve been seeing Jesus do miracles, and they’ve been listening to His teaching, but they don’t see Him clearly. They’ve seen what Jesus could do but they don’t know exactly who He is. They don’t see Him clearly; it’s hazy. They hear what Jesus is saying but they’re not really listening. They see what He’s doing, but they’re not really looking clearly. Their spiritual vision is blurred.

In verse 25,

*25Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.*

Only Jesus can open the eyes of the blind. Only Jesus can restore vision.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,

That saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I’m found

Was blind but now I see.

So, there are two things happening here in this passage. You have physical vision being restored, and you have spiritual vision being taught. So, let’s talk about both of these. We’re going to talk about the physical miracle first. Jesus gave this man perfect vision, right? He went from blind to 20/20. No contacts, no glasses, no LASIK surgery, no visit to the optometrist.

This week, as I was studying this passage, I called Dr. Taylor, and I was like, “Man, I have a lot of questions about the eyeball, about sight. I’m studying this and I’m just curious.” I said, “I wear contacts. You know that. I’m just curious. I’ve been here a few times when I’ve had some issues.” My prescription is -4.25, which is not terrible, but if I didn’t have contacts in right now, I would just see a bunch of blurry folks. I couldn’t differentiate between any of your faces. It would just be a sea of people. I can see up close very good, but I can’t see far away good at all.

So, I asked him, “What’s the worst prescription? If mine’s -4.25, what’s the worst prescription?” He said, “It’s been recorded that the worst prescription was -100,” and for some of you who wear contacts, you say, “Oh, that’s really bad.” Yeah, that’s terrible. That’s crazy. He said, “I’ve never seen that. The worst I’ve seen is -31, which is still pretty rough.” And I asked him about those people because I couldn’t drive if I didn’t have contacts in or have glasses on. But if some people like us, who wear contacts and glasses, were to be transported back, and live in Jesus’ day, would we be considered blind? I’m just wondering. He said, “It depends on the task at hand. For me, I would not be a good hunter-gatherer, because I couldn’t see very far and see what I was going to shoot. But I could be a tax collector. I could sit down and read what’s right in front of me. So, it depends on what you’re doing.” And I asked him, “Are there different forms of blindness?” That sounds like a stupid question, but I thought I’d ask it anyway, and he said, “Yes.” Snap, that’s cool. I didn’t know that. He said, “The eye itself could be healthy but the brain could have issues to where you couldn’t see. So, your eyeballs could be healthy but your brain could have problems, which leads to blindness. So, if there was trauma to the brain, or if there was a stroke, it could affect your vision.” I remember having a kid when I was a student pastor, and he had a tumor, which destroyed his optic nerve, and he went blind. From the back of the head to the front, there’s a communication called the visual pathway. I learned so much. The brain is connected to the eyeballs by the optic nerve. So, your brain is coming through your eyeballs. There’s a picture up on the screen.



See the optic nerve over here? That’s a part of your brain, coming through your head into your eyeballs. It was so cool to hear Dr. Taylor talk about these things and explain these things to me. He was so excited. He’s been doing this for decades. It’s a marvel, the fact that we have an eyeball, but the fact that we have two of these things. This is happening all the time – the eyes and the brain are working together as a team. There’s so much going on optically and neurologically all at the same time. It’s mindboggling.

He said, “I think you’re going to appreciate this.” He sent me a text message, and he said, “I want you to go watch this video.” This is a retired neurosurgeon explaining in one minute what happens when you receive a command. Now, he’s only explaining this from the ear side of things; we couldn’t find one for the eyeball, but the same thing applies, alright? Watch this video.

Ben Carson Brain pathway from Hearing to hand raising

<https://www.youtube.com/watch/4bjGz_DYEZE>

Are you serious? He was speaking English. I went back and watched it a few times. I couldn’t really pronounce or understand one of those words that he said. All of that happens when you hear something, so you can raise your hand. Imagine what’s going on with your eyeballs. This is absolutely astonishing. The fact that that man is that smart is astonishing, that he can repeat all of those things. But it’s intriguing, because God designed us in such a unique way.

So, here in this passage, we have the Creator God, in the flesh, Jesus, standing before this man. I want you to picture in your mind, Jesus standing before this man, holding his head and touching his eyeballs. This blind man, who could not see anything. Jesus restores all that is wrong in his eyes, in his brain, in his visual pathways. We don’t know what it was, but his Creator did, and He just fixed it all, just like that. That’s crazy, divine power. Amazing grace, great mercy. Sincere love. This man ends up seeing clearly, fully, completely. Jesus never does anything halfway. He was no slack Savior and He was no halfhearted healer, either. He never takes a shortcut. He’s extremely intentional. The man ends up seeing, but it didn’t happen immediately.

Now, some might say, “Well, clearly, this is pointing to Jesus not being all-powerful, because He had to do the miracle in two stages. This was a progressive miracle. He messed up the first time.” No, that’s not what is happening at all. We’ve already seen, throughout the Gospel, that God heals, Jesus heals immediately, without even seeing a person. He heals. He could just speak it and it’s done. Or somebody could just touch Him and they are healed. So, we know that it has nothing to do with Jesus’ lack of power, or that He had to try again, because the first try didn’t work. This is not Jesus struggling; This is Jesus teaching. He’s teaching. The question from last week still ringing in the disciples’ ears, “Do you still not yet understand? Do you still not understand? I’m the God-man. I’m the Messiah, for Jews and Gentiles. The Gospel is for all nations.”

In the Christ-centered Commentary, it says this,

These verses constitute a visual parable that, though historically true, also symbolizes the spiritual pilgrimage of the disciples. Mark purposely sandwiches it between 8:14-21 and 8:27-38. The two-step healing Jesus uses is intentional. It is meant to portray the gradual, step-by-step understanding of the disciples.

*“A visual parable”* – I love that. I want you to notice this. How many times have we pointed out Mark using his favorite word, “immediately”? About every sermon, right? It’s there. What’s not in this passage? “Immediately.” It’s not there. Jesus wasn’t struggling; He was teaching. “I have the power to give physical vision, but I’m more concerned about your spiritual vision,” which is why He focuses on His conversation with His disciples, which we’re going to get to in a second. He finishes this section in verse 26. He says,

*26And he sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”*

Once again, Jesus did not do the miracle to gain a following, to attract attention, or to put on a show. Jesus cares about the individual heart. He wants you to see Him ministering to this man one-on-one. That’s what Jesus wants. He wants you to see Him ministering to this man one-on-one. He wants a personal relationship with you. He wants you to see Him clearly. Jesus is instructing the man, “Don’t go back to the village. Go home.” Don’t go back to where Jesus led you out of; go home.

Can you just imagine with me for a brief second that man’s walk home? Just imagine his walk home. He’d never walked home seeing everything. I’ll bet he took some things in. I bet he took a leisurely stroll, don’t you think? A lot of times, we can just take for granted the things that we have, the things that we can do. When is the last time you drove down the four-lane and you were just amazed at the mountains and the beautiful valley that we live in? On Wednesday night, I was with the students at ROY, and we were doing small group outside, and I was so distracted during small group because the sunset was amazing. It was beautiful. There were tons of colors. Every second it was changing. It was incredible. We get to see that – our Creator and His glory on display.

Let’s check out the next section. This is the apex of Mark’s gospel, in verse 27.

*27And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi.*

So, He’s traveling north again. See the map?

From the top of the Sea of Galilee, where Bethsaida is, right there, He’s going north, up to where where Caesarea Philippi is. Jesus loved to do this; He loved to go on walks with His disciples. And this is the turning point in the Gospel of Mark, where Jesus goes from a public ministry to privately discipling His disciples, until the last week of His life, when they enter back into the city. Jesus loved to be intentional.

Now, we aren’t privy to all the conversations that Jesus had with His disciples. They aren’t recorded for us, right? But what we do know is that Jesus never wasted any time. He always went straight to the heart. So, He asked His disciples questions,

*“Who do people say that I am?”*

We all know people talk, right? Everybody could agree with that; people are good at talking. People love gossip. People love to talk about the news. People like to talk about what they heard, what they saw. People are good at talking. People have their own ideas, and nobody has any qualms about sharing their own opinion. “What do you think about this Jesus guy? What do you think about this new prophet in town? What are they saying?” Jesus says, “Hey, y’all, tell me what are the people saying?” and they said,

*28And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.”*

So, there’s something unique about each of these responses, right? They give us three responses and notice what they don’t say. They don’t say, “You’re a magician. You’re a good teacher. You’re an insurrectionist.” No, each of these three responses are otherworldly responses. Because they knew that this man was doing things that no one else has ever done. He had to be from God, somehow. This was otherworldly. This is very unique. John the Baptist has already been beheaded, so maybe he was raised back from the dead and he was doing some crazy things, because he defeated the power of death. But it’s not John the Baptist. Or Elijah, he was a crazy, awesome prophet in the Old Testament, who got carried away in a fiery chariot. He didn’t even die. Maybe he came back. Maybe he’s doing some crazy miracles. Or maybe it’s one of the prophets of old. But they all passed away. So, the only option people could come up with to answer, “Who is Jesus?” is that it had to be some man who returned from the grave supernaturally. Jesus’ true identity was veiled. Nobody knew who He truly was.

But Jesus wasn’t concerned about popular opinion; He wants to get personal with the disciples. Look at the last two verses, 29-30,

*29And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” 30And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.*

“I know what other people say, but what about you? What do you say? Who do you say that I am? What are your personal beliefs?”

Today, in 2024, sitting here, who do you say Jesus is? There is no greater question that humans could answer than this, “Who do you say that Jesus is?” Everything over the last eight chapters has been leading to this point in Mark’s gospel, and Peter answers. He actually has the right answer. He didn’t put his foot in his mouth. He didn’t mess up this time. He says,

*“You are the Christ.”*

And Jesus says, “Yep, that’s right. Good job. But it’s not because you’re smart, and it’s not because you paid attention. It’s not because you paid attention better than other disciples when I’ve been teaching or I’ve been doing miracles.” Matthew records a few more details for how Peter knew that. Matthew 16 says,

*“Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.”*

Such spiritual sight can only come from the Lord. Christ is not Jesus’ last name. It’s a title. ‘Christ’ means ‘the Chosen One, the Messiah, the promised Savior.’ Remember from our study in Genesis, Christ is the seed of the woman. From Genesis 3:15, this is the Anointed King, the Deliverer of His people from bondage of death, the One who had come to reverse the curse. That’s what ‘Christ’ means. Who do you say Jesus is?

James Edwards said,

The categories of John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the prophets are no closer to the real Jesus than are the various ‘Jesus’ figures of historical criticism or Enlightenment rationalism or feminism or Aryan and racist theories or the Jesus Seminar or the various sociological models in our day.

There are a lot of ideas of who Jesus is, but there is only one correct answer: Jesus is the Christ. He’s the Son of God, the Messiah. He’s the Savior. He’s the Holy One of God. He’s the only God-man.

Now, verse 30 is pretty curious. Why does Jesus strictly charge the disciples to tell nobody? Don’t tell anybody. Wy doesn’t Jesus want His true messianic identity to be revealed yet? Because He doesn’t want to mess up the mission. And He clarifies the mission the Father sent Him to do and to accomplish in the next verse. You don’t have to wait for it for next weekend. I’m going to read it for you. Verse 31,

*And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.*

They were not expecting the Christ to have to go through that. In his commentary, William Lane gives a wonderful explanation for why Jesus is so strict with His disciples about not telling anyone that He’s the Christ. This is what he says,

It was not necessary that the people recognize that He is the Messiah until after He had fulfilled His messianic vocation through death and resurrection. This is the only time in Mark that an injunction to silence is explained and it provides the key to all of the previous injunctions to silence. The necessity of the passion in obedience to the will of God accounts for the so-called secrecy phenomena in the Gospel. The “messianic secret” is God’s intention to provide salvation through a suffering Savior who is identified with the people by His free decision to bear the burden of judgment up on human rebellion. The repeated injunctions to silence throughout the Gospel of Mark are an expression of Jesus’ fidelity to the divine plan of salvation.

He was so focused on the mission the Father sent Him to accomplish. He didn’t want to do anything to mess it up.

So, as we come to a close, I want us to do some personal reflection. If you’re a follower of Christ tonight, if this is not your first Easter as a Christian, if you know what it means to say, “I’ve been crucified with Christ. It’s no longer I who live but it’s Christ who lives in me. And the life I live now in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.” If that’s you, if you’re a follower of Jesus today, we need to answer some personal questions. Are you carrying people to Jesus with your prayers? Are you one of the no-name people who are bearing the burdens of others before the Lord? Are you earnestly asking the Lord for other people who are blind, who are not begging for themselves? Are you humbly begging for Jesus to touch your friends? Because, church, we are the hands and feet of Jesus on the Earth. We are the body of Christ in the world today. So, are you stopping, are you reaching out, are you touching the hand of the spiritually blind? Are you introducing them to Christ, to see who Jesus really is?

You can’t go based on what people say. If you’re not a Christian today, you can’t base your answer upon what other people are saying. It’s not about popular opinion. It’s about what you personally believe. You have to answer Jesus’ question for yourself. Will you move from curiosity about Jesus to commitment to Jesus as Lord? Do you see yourself as a sinner in desperate need of a Savior? Will you move from admiration about Jesus (He’s pretty cool. He’s a good teacher. He did some cool things and we’re still talking about them thousands of years later) to worship? Will you surrender, bow down, and worship Him as Savior and Lord?

My prayer is that we would all, every person in this room, respond today in repentance, and faith, and worship of our Risen King, because He is the Christ, the One and only Person, the God-man, to defeat the power of sin, and death, and give us the victory over the grave. Let’s pray.

*Father, we thank you so much for your Word. We thank you for how detailed and clear it is. And Jesus, for how personal you are, how you interacted with your Creation when you walked on this Earth. I praise you so much for your compassion, for your tolerance, for your patience, for your lovingkindness. We praise you for your power, that you have the power to rewire our brains, to fix what is broken and wrong inside of our minds, and our eyes that might see. Oh, Lord, I pray that you would grant spiritual sight tonight. Would you glorify yourself by advancing your Church, because there is no one like you, Jesus? We want to see you as you truly are. It’s in your mighty name that we pray, Amen.*