

Easter 2023 – What He’s Done

1 John 4. 1 John contains *several* of the verses I’m going to cite this morning, and the others, I’m going to put on the screen.

But first, I want to start with a little **Jeopardy**. Not what you expected on Easter morning, but bear with me. Jeopardy, crowd participation style. Starting with “Religion for 200.” Here’s the answer: “Though all the world hasn’t heard of him, he’s still the most well-known name in history.” Who is _____ ? (Jesus)

How about “Religion for \$400? The calendar followed by the vast majority of the world is based on his birth.” Who is _____ ? (Jesus).

And for all the marbles, “He’s the focal point of the number one best-selling book of all time.” Who is _____ ? (Jesus)

Crazy isn’t? That the world marks time based on his life, and his name is so well known, but so few know much about him. So few know the real significance of his life. So few could really *answer* the question, “Who is Jesus?” Not to mention *what he’s done*.
(Outline)

And it’s important. Because when you get right down to it, he’s the most important *person* in the world, who did the most important *thing*, and requires the most important *response*.

So let’s start with this:

Who Jesus is

Some say he’s just a famous religious leader. One among many. Others say, no, I think he was more than that. I think he was a spiritual prophet; someone we should listen to; a well-meaning advisor. Skeptics say, no way. He was a delusional disruptor. An over-the-top fanatic. A major inconvenience. A blatant liar. And a few heretical people are saying he was transgender. Sick and wrong.

But those who knew him best, those who were close to him, those who wrote the Bible, said that he’s **the Son of God**. In fact, that was their response to the question Jesus *himself* posed. Who do people say that I am? Matt 16. (**Matt 16:14–17**)

[14] *And they said, “Some say John the Baptist [a fiery preacher who was beheaded], others say Elijah [a truth-speaker and miracle worker from the Old Testament], and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”* All dead people who might have come back to life.

[15] *He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”* (ESV)

[16] *Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* There it is.
[17] *And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah [Simon, son of Jonah]! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.* God the Father. In other words, you’re right.

Those who knew him best, the Apostles, said he was the Son of God. Revealed to them by his Father. *God* the Father. Even those who *didn’t* know him said he was the Son of God. Like the Roman centurion at the cross (Mt 27:54). And some of the demons Jesus encountered (Mt 8:29). Over and over again, the Bible says that Jesus is the Son of God.

Which means, he’s God in the flesh. To say that you were someone’s son in first-century Jewish culture, was to say that you were just *like* them; just like your dad. Of the same essence as he is. Of the same nature. Cut from the same cloth. Having the same attributes.

Except in this case, he also took on flesh. So that he could live *among* us, live *like* us, and be *known* by us.

Despite what *some* people say, centuries later, Jesus is the Son of God. God in the flesh.

Second, he’s **the Promised Deliverer**. Just like Peter said. “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*” (Mt 16:16) *The Christ*, meaning the Messiah. The deliverer. The one promised by God through the Old Testament prophets. Promised to come and promised to save. Promised and prophesied to *deliver* his people from their sins.

➤ Now, at this point you might be thinking, “Okay, but how do we know the Bible is *true*? Why should we trust *this* book instead of some other? Or any book at all?

Well, fulfilled prophecies are one reason. And a big reason. Conservatively speaking, the Old Testament contains 65 different prophecies about Jesus. Written by different people at different times, between 400 and 1400 *years* before he ever showed up. And I’m not talking about veiled references or allusions to Jesus. There are *hundreds* of those. I’m talking about explicit prophecies about a Messiah, a Christ, a deliverer, clearly fulfilled by Jesus.

And that’s just the tip of the iceberg. There are hundreds of *other* prophecies about cities, nations, kings, individuals, and *events* that have come true.

We can trust this book because so many of its prophecies have already been fulfilled. Not to mention the fact that it’s historically accurate, supported by archeology, and written by eyewitnesses. Some of whom *died* for what they wrote. Without denying one word.

The point being, when it says Jesus is the Son of God and promised deliverer, we can trust it.

➤ And the same is true of this third descriptor. He’s **the Savior of the World**. Like it says in 1 John 4:14 – *We have seen and testify* [the Apostle John says; referring to he and the other apostles] *that the Father* [God the Father] *has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*

God didn’t send his Son into the world to condemn it, but save it. (John 3:17). We’re condemned already. Condemned to suffer for our sin and sinfulness for all eternity. The Bible is clear. *The wages of sin is death* (Rom 3:23). Spiritual death, in the throes of hell.

And Jesus came to save us. Save those who believe it. And believe in him. As the Savior of the World. That’s the first category about the most important person in the world.

The second, is . . .

What Jesus did

In other words, he came to save us, but how?

Well, after living a perfect life, and satisfying all of God's righteous requirements, he **died for our sins**. He died a terrible, gruesome death. Bludgeoned, bloodied, and pierced. 6 hours one Friday, on a cross.

But even more important, is that he died for *us*. For our *sins*. Your sins and my sins. The things we've done wrong and haven't done right. And the things we *will* do wrong and *won't* do right.

Over and over again, in multiple different ways, the Bible says *Christ died for our sins* (1 Cor 15:3). Some of the most precious words it contains. *He bore our sins in his body on the tree*, the cross (1 Pet 2:24). Suffering the penalty *we* deserve to suffer.

And in doing so, he **paid our debt**. Completely. Like it says in Col 2:14. God made us alive, speaking to those who *believe* in Jesus, *having forgiven us all our trespasses* [all our sins], *by canceling the record of debt that stood against us* . . . *This he set aside, nailing it to the cross*.

When Jesus was nailed to the cross, he paid all that we *owe* God, for our countless *sins* against God. In other words, he *satisfied* our debt, and cancelled it. Tore it up and threw it away.

Which means we're free and clear. The very reason we sing, "Oh praise the One, who paid my debt, and raised this life, up from the dead."

➤ Which brings us to Easter. Jesus not only died for our sins and paid our debt, but **rose again**. He rose again from the dead. The Apostle Paul couldn't be more explicit. (1 Cor 15:3-5)

For I delivered to you [he said] as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, [5] and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter], then to the twelve. The 12 Apostles.

The Bible says it, Jesus did it, and Paul affirms it. He rose again. The very reason we *celebrate* Easter.

And he did so to defeat death, and raise us. **Rom 6:9** – *We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him*. No longer has any effect on him; power over him. He defeated it.

And not just for himself, but for us. He defeated death for *us*. Not that we won't die, but that we won't stay that way. Because *he who raised the Lord Jesus* [God the Father] *will raise us also with Jesus* the Bible says (2 Cor 4:14).

We'll die, but we won't stay that way. Because in Christ, united with Christ, death no longer has a hold on us either. Because *he* is risen, we are risen. Spiritually now (Eph 2:6), and physically later (1 Thess 4:16-17).

Jesus died for our sins, paid our debt, and rose again to raise us.

Which leads us to . . .

What Jesus offers

Things that are just as amazing as what he did. Things that affect us right now. And determine the course of our lives for all eternity.

Starting with **forgiveness**. Jesus offers forgiveness. 1 John 1:8-10 – *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*. The first step in receiving the forgiveness Jesus offers, is *admitting* your sin and sinfulness. If you don't, you're just deceiving yourself.

On the other hand, v9 – *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. If we come clean to God, he won't hold our sins against us. He won't require payment for them. Plus, he'll wash us white as snow. Cleanse us.

Then he ends where he started. [10] *If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us* [his truth]. We not only deceive *ourselves* if we say we haven't sinned, lie ourselves, but we accuse *God* of lying. Because *all* have sinned the Bible says (Rom 3:23).

Jesus offers forgiveness, but you have to confess. You have to admit it and want it.

Second, he offers **life**. Life to the full and life forever. Like Jesus said in John 10:10 – *I came that they may have life* [eternal life] *and have it abundantly*. To the full. Full of purpose, full of blessing, full of joy, and full of Jesus. Jesus offers *that* kind of life.

And yet so many people don't want it because they think they have it already. They're like little kids, content with mudpies in the street, while sandcastles await at the beach. (C.S. Lewis). They're content with *fool's* gold, when the *real* thing is staring them in the face. Content with oysters when they could have pearls. Including *the* pearl. The pearl of greatest price. *Life* in Christ.

How about it? Are you content with lesser things to the exclusion of greater things? Content with earthly things instead of eternal things? A meager life instead of a full one? Jesus still offers.

Forgiveness, life, and **salvation**. He offers salvation. Salvation from the *consequences* of your sin. The eternal consequences of God's wrath. His holy wrath toward your unholy sin. And rebellion. And rejection.

Look at 1 Jn 2:2 – *He [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world*. Propitiation means "appeasement of God's wrath." Jesus is the appeasement of God's wrath for our sins. Why? Because he bore the full brunt of it on the cross. Saving *us* from bearing any of it at all.

Like Paul says in **Rom 5:9**, speaking to believers. *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood* [declared *righteous* by the death of Jesus on our behalf], *much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God*. His righteous anger toward our unrighteous sin. Jesus offers us salvation from that. Together with forgiveness and life.

But you have to receive them. They're not automatically yours. Which brings us to our last category.

What Jesus requires

The blessings he offers don't apply to us just because he died and rose again. He requires **faith** on our part. Meaning belief and trust. Belief in who Jesus is and what he did, and *trust* in him to apply it to your life. Now and forever. Jesus requires faith in his grace. His grace of forgiveness and life and salvation. It's a requirement.

As is **repentance**. Repentance for your sin and sinfulness. Repentance for ignoring God instead of living for him. Doing what's wrong instead of what's right. Living your way instead of his. You have to repent (Mk 1:15). You have to ask God to forgive you, and stop. Forgive you, and commit to what's right. Commit to *follow* Jesus. Commit to *live* for him. He requires repentance.

And last, is **obedience**. Jesus requires obedience. Look at [1 John 2:3-6](#).

And by this we know that we have come to know him [we've been saved], *if we keep his commandments* [obey]. [4] *Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,* [5] *but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected* [his sacrificial love]. *By this we may know that we are in him:* [6] *whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*

Jesus didn't die in your place so you could live like the devil and still go to heaven. Jesus didn't die for your sins so you could keep on doing them without a care in the world. He didn't rise again so you could ignore him all but two or three days of the year. He didn't save you to live a life *separate* from his body, his church.

He saved you to be all in. He saved you to *live* for him. He saved you to obey. Not to *earn* your salvation, but show it. Not to pay him back, but give him your all. **(Summary)**

Faith, repentance, and obedience, are what Jesus requires, to receive what he offers, because of what he did.

If you're ready for that, if you want to be saved and live for Jesus from now on, pray with me right now.

➤ *Invitation*

In the quietness of your heart, start by admitting your sin and sinfulness. That's the first step. "God, I *admit* it. I've sinned, and I'm sinful. I know it and I own it."

Then confess your *belief* in Jesus. "God, I believe. I believe that Jesus is your Son and my Savior. I believe that he died for my sins, paid my debt, and rose again for my life. I believe."

And then express your *repentance*. "God, I'm sorry for my sin, and I'm done with it. Please forgive me and help me to live your way from now on. I want to follow you. I repent."

And last, *receive*. "God, I receive the salvation and life you so freely offer. I receive Jesus into my life, to be my Lord and Savior from now on."

I admit, I believe, I repent, and I receive.

As we continue in prayer, if you just prayed with me, either for the first time or the first real time, will you raise your hand and look at me and wait for me to acknowledge you? I'm not going to call you out or call you forward, but I do want to rejoice with you, and commend you, and pray for you.

Prayer – God, thank you for all you've done and all you're doing. Give those who just prayed blessed assurance that they are yours. Assurance that you are faithful and just. Confidence in your Word and promises. Bless them and protect them. And find them faithful all the days of their life.

You Are Loved