

Who Is This?!

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How are you all doing today? [laughs] How many of you are awake today? Wow. I understand you've been going through stories on the life of Jesus – is that correct? So Pastor Kim didn't lead me astray. It's actually a real joy and an honor to be able to be with you today and to kind of fill in while he's somewhere else, which is nice! It's a good thing for a pastor to be able to do, to go away and to forget the church exists for a little while. Let God breathe life back into you, because you guys just suck it all... No, I'm joking! I'm joking.

We want to talk today about today. Pastor Kim specifically told me, "You don't have to preach about Palm Sunday," and I thought, 'Well why not?' I mean, it's Palm Sunday! Let's spend a little bit of time today talking about Palm Sunday, *but* I want us to understand something; I actually brought legitimate notes today, because I've got statistics and stuff that I don't want to get the numbers wrong on. Some of you know that I was a teacher. Bible college professor, I'm a teacher at heart, so, pop quiz: How many chapters did Matthew write? How many? Oh, trick question! He didn't write any chapters! All right. Now the real question: How many chapters in the book of Matthew? 28. Did you realize that Palm Sunday starts on Matthew Chapter 21? 28.5% of Matthew's letter covers this week and the following month or so of Jesus' life. 28%. How long was Jesus on earth in ministry? Roughly three years. And 28% of Matthew's recorded gospel deals with about 6-8 weeks. That begins to show us how important this is. How about the gospel of Mark? How many chapters in Mark? 16. Palm Sunday is Mark Chapter 11. 37.5% of Mark deals with this last week of Jesus. Luke: Chapters? 24. Yeah, some of you are now flipping ahead. "I know where he's going! I'm going to find out!" Yeah. 23% of Luke has to do with Passion Week and following. 23%.

How about the gospel of John? How many chapters? 21. Who is John to Jesus? [some congregants answered] No, that's John the Baptist; this is a different John. Good answer, though! Very good answer. You know what? We often forget that, don't we? We deal with John the Baptist in such a way that somehow he's, you know, a little bit disconnected, and his death and everything, but we've got to remember this was Jesus' cousin when he was beheaded. How many of you would just treat the beheading of your cousin as nothing? Yeah, exactly. It's Jesus' cousin when we talk about John the Baptist. This is John the Apostle. Different John. John was a very common name.

Who was John to Jesus? The one He loved. This is Jesus' best friend. Jesus' absolute best friend. John is writing this about 90 A.D. He is the only surviving original. He is the last of the 12. He is on the isle of Patmos, exiled there, everybody is his children we see that in his letter. "My dear children, I write this to you..." John Chapter 12 verse 12 is where Passion Week begins for John. 47.6% - almost half of the gospel of John – deals from today to the Pentecost. *Almost half*. Do you start to see how important this coming week is? This is huge! Not just on the church calendar. I mean, we think Palm Sunday, it's kind of cute, we have the kids – I loved the kids, by the way, that was awesome, that was so awesome – but we have this thing and it's like it's Palm Sunday and we'll go through it and everybody's more concerned about the Easter eggs and the chocolate and the bunnies and... Do you know what? This week there's more written in the gospels about this week than any other week in scripture. This is huge! We need to be aware of that. I want to take a look today at the events that kicked that week off, and we're going to take a look at all four gospel accounts, so have your fingers ready, because we're going to be doing some flipping. And, of course, generally, we know kind of what happened, but let's refresh our memories. Let's go to the gospel of John to begin with. John Chapter 12, and I'm going to begin reading in verse 12.

On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." These things His disciples did not understand at the first – I love John's honesty. John's not afraid to say, "Yeah, we totally missed the boat on that one, but we remembered! We remembered.

These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

(NASB)

Let's pause for a moment of prayer.

[praying]

Father, I ask that as we go through these passages today, that You would speak into our hearts. Father, may these words be Your words and not mine. May Your words burn into our souls today, mine included. May my words quickly be forgotten. Father, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable today in Your sight. Thank you, Father. Amen.

It was an amazing day. Big crowds, parade, I mean, who doesn't like a parade, right? Especially an impromptu... We thought we invented this mob thing, that flashes across YouTube. Flash mobs. We didn't invent it; the Jews did! We're talking the original flash mob here. Unorganized, impromptu, everybody was there. Well, you know what? Everybody didn't have the same opinion, everybody didn't have the same understanding, and we want to take a look at four different groups of people that day. And we're going to ask one simple question: Who is this?

Flip over to the gospel of Mark, if you will. Mark Chapter 11. Page 74 if you've got the same bible that I do. In the back part. You know, when we were in Ukraine, there's very few bible publishers and so we could do that. We would give page numbers out when we preached in Ukraine because 99% of the people all had the same published bible, and it was all the same page number. Mark Chapter 11. Let's begin reading at verse 1. By the way, if you're wondering, I'm reading from the New American Standard. Some of you have other translations – that's fine. But that's probably why you're going, "Huh? What's he reading? I don't get it."

As they *approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He *sent two of His disciples, and *said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here." They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they *untied it. Some of the bystanders were saying to them...

(NASB)

"Um, can I help you? Um, hello?" How many of you would watch somebody walk up to your neighbour's car and unlock it and drive away? Yeah. We kind of forget that. This is what's happening here! I had a guy wandering around in my yard on Friday. It's like, "Hello? Can I help you? Why are you here? What are you doing?" I mean, he had a right to be there, it was okay. But... "Excuse me? Hello? What's going on here?"

Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them...

(NASB)

"Just tell them the Lord has need of it."

"Oh! Okay! Go ahead, take it. Enjoy. Good luck. Remember, it's never been ridden."

They *brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it.

(NASB)

First group I want to look at is the disciples. In particular, these two, but His disciples in general. This is one of the hardest things that I would have to have done as Jesus' disciple. Going out in groups of two to minister and cast out demons and preach and stuff? Cool. I'm up for that. Going into somebody's yard and untying their donkey and its colt? You want me to what?! Ugh, er, hah... Everybody's going to Jerusalem; this is Passover week. This is huge! There's crowds around! "Somebody's going to see me!" Well, yeah, that's why I'm telling you what to say. See, for me, it's not necessarily the difficult things that are hard to do, but it's the uncomfortable things. And the amazing thing is Jesus didn't hesitate to give them a very strange and difficult task. "Hey, the next village? Two houses down, three doors over, the pink one, you know? With the yellow trim. Must be Ukrainians living there." I didn't say that! If it was Ukrainian it would be blue and yellow – those are our colors. "There's a donkey outside tied up, and a colt. Bring them. Somebody has problems with that, just say the Lord has need of it." "Okay." *exclaims*

See, the other thing is Jesus didn't say, "If you'd like to," or, "You know what? It might be a good idea to..." He just told them to do it, and He expected them to obey. There was an expectation of obedience tucked into that. "I'm going to need it. Hey, there's a prophecy riding on this, guys. You don't necessarily know it." John says, "We didn't have a clue what was going on to start with. We remember after Jesus was in heaven." He was more than likely one of the ones that went to get the donkey! There's a prophecy riding on this. Jesus knew that. "Behold, daughters of Zion. Relax. Chill out. It's not an invasion. It's not a conquering hero that's coming in. They come on a horse! It's your king." Wow. "There's a prophecy riding on this. I need that. I expect you to obey." And they did!

[laughs] There are some times when thinking outside the box is really good, and really creative, and really helpful. But when God gives you a task, thinking outside the box is not the time to be doing that. Most of the time, when God gives me a task and I start thinking outside the box, that's because in the box are the instructions I'm supposed to do, and I'm trying to find a way around it! How can I do this easier? How can I do this...mm... "This makes me uncomfortable," or, "This is too hard," or, "I have to trust too much," or, "I don't understand." Do you think the disciples understood this? Jesus didn't say, "In order to please God, you must understand." Those who come to God must believe that He is... without faith it is impossible to please God. Not without knowledge, not without understanding – without faith. Without trust. Jesus expected them to do it and He expected them to do *exactly* what He had asked them to do. But the cool thing is He also trusted them to do that. He didn't send a back-up plan. He didn't say, "Oh, just in case you don't come back with that, I'll figure something else out." He trusted them to obey. He gave them a task, expected their obedience, and trusted them to do it. And they did. They obeyed completely, they obeyed immediately. They followed His instructions 100%. What does that tell us about the disciples?

Uh-oh. Allow me to introduce myself. *speaks Ukrainian* Oh, sorry. We're not in Ukraine anymore, are we? I'm Orban Bellamy, and I'm a teacher at heart, so when I ask a question and pause, that means it's your turn to talk in church today. You're allowed to! On one condition: It's *after* one of my questions that has a pause, and you're answering it. So, what was the question that I asked? What does this tell us about the relationship between Jesus and His disciples? [some congregants responded – inaudible] Trust. What else? [inaudible from congregation] They were devoted. Sorry? [inaudible] They knew He was the Master. [laughs] That is so significant, and we, in our culture, don't get it. How many of you are a disciple of somebody? Exactly! We don't get discipleship. How many of you have a mentor? Awesome! Cool! How many of you have studied somewhere at some point in time – you were or are a student? And the rest of you are just sitting there in your ignorance, I'm assuming. [congregation laughs] Wow! Okay! Yeah, I'm pastor at a cowboy church – we're a little bit more down-to-earth than most.

See, we think discipleship is all about learning and all about students or pupils or learning from Jesus, or we take it a step farther and think that it's some kind of mentorship. It isn't! It goes so far beyond that! We have lost this element of culture. Discipleship is not to sit at someone's feet and learn. Discipleship is not to pose questions that you're struggling with and have them breathe life into you. Discipleship is emulation. Discipleship says, "*That's* who I'm going to be like. And I'm going to walk with Him, I'm going to eat with Him, I am going to be where He is, and I am going to live

His life with Him until I become like Him.” That’s discipleship. These disciples were with Jesus 24/7, unless Jesus sent them away on a task. *That’s* discipleship. Three years. I mean, most bible schools are four! How can these guys do it in three? Well, because they had an intensive study program. They *walked* with Jesus. They talked. They *lived* with Him for three years. They were disciples. He was the Master. They *knew* Him. And He knew them. They didn’t know *about* Jesus; they *knew* Him. Top to bottom, side to side. They knew His eating habits. They knew How often He brushed His teeth. They knew all of that because they lived His life with Him in order to be like Him. That’s a disciple. Not someone who learns about, not someone who learns from, but someone who emulates.

The closest thing we have today, and it’s a negative, is hero worship. How many of you have or have had a hero? I had a hero growing up. I would not necessarily want to be like them today, but I had a hero growing up. Oftentimes, we categorize someone who has a hero as someone who’s a little bit disconnected and needs a life, because they don’t have one of their own. Or hero worship where they are – that’s what true discipleship is. Is so filling their minds and eyes and life with this person, they’re the only ones they want to be like. That’s discipleship. That’s who these men were.

Let’s take a look at another group. Luke Chapter 19. Luke 19. And I’m going to begin reading at verse 39. Actually, no – I’m going to read from verse 36. We’ll pick up the context where we left off with the disciples bringing the donkey and the colt to Jesus. They brought it to Jesus, they threw their coats on the colt, and put Jesus on it.

As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road. As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen – we’ll touch on that later – shouting:

***“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord;
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”***

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him...

(NASB)

[in dramatic voice] “Tell them to shut up!” You see what it says? It’s what it says! I mean, in today’s vernacular.

“Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”

(NASB)

I love Jesus’ response. I’m sure there was a twinkle in His eye and a twitch of a smile on His face as He looked at the Pharisees and said, “You really want me to tell them to shut up?” [shouts] “YES!” “Are you sure?” [shouts] “YES!” “Because if I do, the rocks are going to cry out – what are you going to do then?” “You’re having trouble with people screaming; what are you going to do when the pavement erupts in praise?!”

See, the Pharisees *hated* Jesus. That's the second group we want to look at. The Pharisees were antagonistic; they despised Him. He was a threat to their entire system of authority, because [laughs] Jesus was just different. I mean, you can't have the 200% being 100% God, 100% man in one body and have Him interact with the culture around the way other people do. It just doesn't work that way. The Pharisees despised Him. There aren't enough negatives to describe how the Pharisees acted and reacted with Jesus, but there is a little glimpse. Let's look at John for a minute. John Chapter 12 there's a bit of a situation I want you to see. Now, John Chapter 12 comes right after John Chapter 11, which, of course, makes sense. But that's where we see Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus raising Lazarus happens, ultimately, on His way to Palm Sunday. So this is in the recent past; this happened, like, last week. Lazarus is raised from the dead. Let's take a look. I'm going to start reading at verse 9 of John Chapter 12.

The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there – that is, where He was with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus – and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.

(NASB – emphasis added)

Do you see the animosity? The chief priests didn't really like Jesus, did they? Do you really see what they were planning on doing? I mean, this is a man that had been dead for three days... Do you remember their response when Jesus said, "Open the tomb." [plugs nose] "Are you sure? Whoo! He stinks by now!" And Jesus raised him from the dead, and he walked out, Lazarus walked out of that tomb. And what did the chief priests do? "We gotta kill him. We have *got* to put that man to death because that miracle is stealing people from us." That's the animosity, the hatred, the poison that's in the souls of the Pharisees and the chief priests. "We've got to kill this man all over again so that we can silence this transition from us to Jesus." Suffice it to say there was not a lot of love lost between the Pharisees to Jesus. That's the second group we see. "Tell them to shut up! You're creating a scene, Jesus. Would you please tell these people to can it already?"

Let's look in Matthew, shall we? Matthew Chapter 21. We're halfway through the groups. We're halfway there. Matthew Chapter 21. So, remember, as we talk about this, Lazarus has just been raised from the dead, that's been going on, that's very prominent in the news, I mean it's on everybody's newsfeed, it's splashed all across Facebook and every news carrier is carrying it whether you're online or whether you're watching the TV or whatever. Matthew 21 starting at verse 8:

Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting,

***“Hosanna to the Son of David;
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord;
Hosanna in the highest!”***

When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, “Who is this?” And the crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.”

(NASB)

Wow! Shouting praises, worshipping... I mean, we all know these songs, right? This is an amazing, amazing event! But let's take a look at the crowd. Let's take a look at this crowd and these followers of Jesus. They were praising, they were exalting Jesus, and of course Jesus was accepting that. Why? Because it was His due. He's the one person who could accept that kind of praise because He *is* God. Riding into Jerusalem on that donkey, He was coming in as their Saviour. He was King, although, in a very different realm than what they were expecting. He says, “Hey, I can tell them to shut up. But My creation is going to praise Me whether it's from human mouths or stones! My creation will praise Me.” So the crowd is shouting and singing, doing what they were doing, and Jesus was accepting all of that.

But you know what? There's a few problems with the crowd's perspective. They called Him a prophet. “Who is this?” This is the prophet, Jesus. Hold on. Is He a prophet? Mmm, not really, no! He was so much more than a prophet! See, the crowd didn't really know who Jesus was. They had misinformation. They had misunderstanding. “Who is this Jesus? Wow! He's the best teacher you've ever heard! You should have heard the beatitudes. Man! He socked it to those Pharisees so good. Ha!” “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees...” Oh, that was so good to hear. What an amazing prophet, what an amazing teacher. Yes!

We read in one of the other accounts that He was claimed as the worker of the miracles. See, the crowd came to see the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee. They had the wrong motives. He was a miracle worker. Are you kidding? He fed 5,000, He fed 4,000 – follow this guy, you get free food! I'm there! Cool! Little tight on the budget this week; I can spend a little bit more on something else and less on food if I follow this guy! I like that! They're there for what they can *get* from Him. Psalm 131. I always get confused because the Russian bible has it numbered a little differently. So if you're using Russian or English it's either Psalm 130 or Psalm 131.

***Surely I have composed and quieted my soul;
Like a weaned child rests against his mother...***

(NASB)

Like a weaned child that rests against his mother's breast. I love that. That is such an amazingly beautiful picture. A weaned child. A weaned child does not look at Mom and go, "Yeah! Lunch! What can I get from Mom?" A weaned child simply wants Mom's presence, not what Mom can give. He wants Mom. The crowd missed that. They wanted the miracles, not the miracle worker. They wanted to see cool things. John tells us that a whole whack of them were there just to see Lazarus, and to see this guy who raised Lazarus from the dead. Wow! This is a cool miracle worker! They were so focused on the amazing, that they missed the person behind that.

"Who is this?" "He's the coming King!" You know what it meant to an early Jew at that point in time when they said the word, "He is our King?" It meant He's going to get rid of Rome. [laughs] Finally! We're going to get rid of Rome. We're going to kick those lousy Italians out of here, and we're going to set up our own government, our own kingdom, and this guy, Jesus, just looks like He has the power to be able to do it! Yes! He's coming in as a King and we're going to kick those sorry *mmhmm* out of here! They had a political agenda for Jesus. That's who the crowd was. The crowd was caught up in the rush of emotion. Let me ask you a question: Five days later, what was the crowd screaming? "Crucify Him. Crucify Him! Because we don't want to fall in bad with the Pharisees. We don't want to get on the wrong side of the existing government. Crucify Him! Get rid of Him! Because I'm going to stand over here right now." When He was coming in? Oh, you know it, they were all on this side, waving their palm branches and putting their coats down. How many of you would put down your coat if you knew farm animals were going to walk across it? That's why we cowboys wear boots and not sandals in the summer! It's a lot nicer to scrape it off a boot than dig it out from between your toes! And it says most of the people were laying out their coats, and some of them were holding palm branches; we kind of get that flipped around. They were caught up in this *huge* emotional event! But they really didn't know who He was; they knew a lot *about* Jesus, but they didn't know Jesus.

And, of course, there's one other group that we read about in Matthew. Chapter 21 verse 10:

When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?"
(NASB)

See, then you have the rest of the populace who were totally clueless. They're ones like me who don't follow the news, who check Facebook, you know, once every other week if you need to or not. They're just kind of a little bit out to lunch; they don't know who this is. Who *is* this Jesus? Who is this? What's the big deal? What's so important about this man? Who is this Jesus? They really had no clue who this was.

Let's stop and take a look at these four groups together. Very briefly. Who is this to the disciples – who was Jesus? He was the Master. He was their Lord. What did Peter say about Jesus? Jesus asked him, "Are you guys going to go away, too?" Peter said, "Jesus, we might like to! It's hard following You! But where else can we go? You have the words of eternal life. Where else can we go? Jesus you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Where else can we go?" The disciples *had* nowhere else because He was their Master. He was the one that they had sold their soul to, so to speak.

To the Pharisees, He was a nuisance, He was a threat, He was somebody that stole away their followers. When we were in Ukraine, there were some of the Orthodox priests there who would talk about us Canadian missionaries who would come with poison in our pockets to lead their sheep astray, because we introduced them to Jesus Christ. Don't hear me say that the Orthodox Church is all wrong; they use the same bible that we do. But in the same way that I wouldn't trust all Orthodox Christians to be going to heaven, I wouldn't trust everybody here to be going to heaven, either.

Our Christian churches are filled with people who are part of the next group: the crowds. They follow because of the emotion. They follow because He's a great teacher. They follow because of the cool things that He can do. I remember one guy sitting in our living room. It was a really, really cool event. We were talking about Jesus walking on the water, and he looked at us, he was out of work, his wife was out of work, he was going to have to move, life was not doing very well for him at that moment. And he looked at us and says, "I have a question."

"Okay."

"Jesus took care of Peter, didn't he?"

"Yeah."

"Okay. But Peter saw Jesus in his life, Peter saw Jesus in his circumstances."

"Well, yeah, exactly."

"Well, I don't. How can I?"

Wow! [claps once] Cool! Let's talk about salvation, and from Peter walking on the water, we began to talk about salvation and we led him to the Lord that night. Three weeks later, he's in a different city, going, "Where's my job? Where is my financial security?" See, he wasn't in it for Jesus; he was in it for what he could get *from* Jesus. Jesus tells us there are going to be *many* who stand before Me and say, "Lord, Lord, did we not perform miracles in Your name? Did we not cast out demons in Your name?" And what's He going to say? "There's the door – use it. I don't know you. You know a lot *about* Me, but you don't *know* Me."

To the crowds, Jesus was the one who could do the miracles, He was the one that could give them stuff, that could do things for them. But He was not one to know intimately, He was not one to obey instantly. He was just some guy that I know a lot about, that it's cool to have up on my shelf so that when I need Him, I can bring Him down and He'll help me. Or someone that, um – oh, I'm going to get in trouble for this – someone that we come to church on Sunday to get all pumped up with emotion about. And by Thursday, yeah, we're planning what we're doing Friday night. By the way, if you're free Friday nights, come to Cowboy Church. How many of our churches are filled with these crowds that come to get an emotional *fix* on Sunday mornings or Friday nights? And they go from fix to fix to fix because they're in it for the emotion, they're in it for the experience; they're not in it for the truth of Jesus Christ. The Man, the God, who is *my* Master.

And then there's the rest of the world around us, who look at us and say, "Who is this?" See, the answer to this question, "Who is this man to *you*?" is the important one. You might be here as a Pharisee today, you might be here as a disciple. You might be here as one of the crowd. You might be here as a bystander who says, "I don't know *nothin*!" Kind of like Sergeant Schultz. Some of you are old enough to get that. [laughs] Exactly. Us sitting here in this church, we know why this question is important, but when you look at it from an outsider's point, what difference does it make what I think about Jesus? What difference does it make? He's just a guy, right? Thank you for asking. John 3. You knew I was going to go there, right? Eventually. John Chapter 3. You know, one of the most famous verses in all of scripture, you watch the Super Bowl and you see half a dozen people with the reference painted across their chest because they think that's witnessing. John 3:16. Who is Jesus to you? Why is that question important?

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

(NASB – emphasis added)

But, you know what? We do that such injustice because we stop there. Keep reading. I'll find it here. I can quote 16 but I can't quite quote the next ones.

"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

(NASB)

Verse 18 is critical.

"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

(NASB)

Why is that question important? Because Jesus is the only one who can take you from death to life. Who is Jesus to *you*? Is He a miracle worker? Is He a wonderful teacher? Is He the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee? Not good enough! I'm sorry, it's not good enough. Is He one to be hated because He *screws up* your life? Welcome to the tribe of Pharisees. Or is He your Lord and Master? One who you emulate, one who you try to live your life with Him. Not Sundays, not Fridays, but every day, 24/7. You walk with Him through your days. Jesus in John 17:3, this is part of His high priestly prayer where He's praying before His crucifixion. He prays for Himself, He prays for His disciples, and He prays for you and me, in John 17. I love that. "And for those that will come because of what they hear from these guys" – that's you and me. Do you realise that Jesus prayed for you? [laughs] It's towards the end of the chapter; read that. We're going to go a little bit earlier. John 17:3. What is this eternal life?

"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

(NASB – emphasis added)

That is eternal life. Not “know about!” But to know. How many of you are married? How many of you noticed a difference from one day to the next? One day you knew *about* your spouse, and the next day you *knew* your spouse? Well, at least you *started* to get to know your spouse. And I’m not just talking sexually, okay? It goes so much than that. I spent time courting my wife, learning about her, talking to her sister, figuring out that at 10:00 my wife’s lights go out. Her sister warned me, she goes, “I don’t care what you’re doing - you can be watching a movie, you can be doing whatever, but 10:00 [makes popping sound] she’s sleeping.” We’ve worked that to about 10:30 or 11 now for most nights, but... See, we learned *about* our spouse-to-be, but when we got married... [laughs] Whoa! “Wait a minute!” I mean it’s one thing to see her when you’re courting but it’s another thing to wake up without the paint on, right? You’ll notice my wife isn’t here today. [congregation laughs] I love my wife dearly, and she likes me a lot. We’ve been married 29 years this May, and, you know, we have a lot of fun together.

But learning to know someone like a spouse takes a lifetime, doesn’t it? I’m still learning new things about Trish; she’s still learning new things about me, because I keep changing just to keep her guessing. [congregation laughs] I don’t want to get her too complacent. She overheard a conversation one day in the store. Terrible thing when you’re missionaries and living in another culture that uses another language. You come back and you find yourself eavesdropping on conversations for the simple fact that you can understand. She heard one person saying to another, “You know what? I’m not a coffee drinker. I’m an espresso drinker.” And Trish thought, ‘That’s Orban.’ She knew me. I don’t do coffee; I do espresso. There’s a difference. If you don’t know that, come to my place. We get to *know* each other in a much, much deeper, more intimate level because we live life together. I know Trish; she knows me. See, it’s not about knowing *about*. If I knew *about* Trish for 29 years, we wouldn’t have three kids, and we wouldn’t have the battle scars that we do from our relationship. We also wouldn’t have the life and joy that we have together. We wouldn’t have the partnership, the camaraderie, the friction, [says, laughingly] the everything that comes with marriage.

John kind of wraps things up for us in Chapter 20. John must have been a typical preacher, because he said, “In conclusion,” and then says, “Oh, by the way,” and then writes another chapter. Writes another whole episode. John Chapter 20 verse 30:

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book...

(NASB)

We get bent out of shape because we think we know what Jesus did. We know very little of what Jesus did. We know enough. We know what we need to know to be convinced and sure of our salvation. But John is sitting there, going, “Guys, whew, if I wrote everything that Jesus did, I don’t think there’s enough parchment in this world to hold it.”

...but these have been written – why? – so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

(NASB)

Who is Jesus? He’s the God man. He is the Savior. But the real question today is: Who is Jesus to you? Let’s pray.

[praying]

Lord Jesus, if we have never done business with You on that question, I ask that You would burn that question into our souls, and that You would haunt us with that question until we settle that in our souls once and for all. Who are You to me? Lord Jesus, you are my Lord and my Master. You are my Savior. You are my best friend. You are my brother. You are King of kings, Lord of lords. And I worship You. And I thank You for loving me. Lord, for each person here, I ask that You would draw them into discipleship, from whatever camp they find themselves in. Be known to them, and not just known about. For Your glory, Lord Jesus and in Your holy name, amen.