

The Birth of the God-King

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean, and I am one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church, and it's my joy and privilege to preach God's word to you this morning. If you don't have a Bible, please raise your hand.

We'd love to give you a copy that you can use. You could use it while you're here. You could take it home with you. Got one for Kevin over here. Thank you, Elena.

And please turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 1. Matthew is the first book in the New Testament, first of the four Gospels, which are really kind of biographies of Jesus.

His life, his birth, his life, his death, and this Christmas, this Advent season, we're particularly remembering his birth. So please turn with you to Matthew 1, verses 18 to 25.

Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word. Heavenly Father, we come to your word with the conviction that every word of Scripture points to and is fulfilled by your Son, Jesus Christ.

[1 : 34] How much more so than this passage, which is about his birth. So we ask that you would exalt the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, that you'd reveal his mercy, his compassion, his grace to us, so that through him all glory may redound to you, God our Father.

Father, we are your people. To whom can we turn?

But to you, you have the words of eternal life. So speak those words to us now, in Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. If you are able, please stand as I read from God's word in honor of God who has given this word to us. Matthew 1, starting in verse 18, going to the end of the chapter.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

[3 : 07] And her husband, Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son.

And he called his name Jesus. This is God's holy, authoritative word. You may be seated. When Adam first sinned in Genesis 3, all of us and all of humanity sinned in Adam because Adam was the firstborn of all humans, and therefore the representative head of the entire human family.

[4 : 38] That's why Romans 5.12 says that sin came into the world through one man, namely Adam, and death through sin, and so death spread to all. Because it was man that sinned, it also must be man that pays the price for sin.

Only a human being can represent humanity. So already in Genesis 3.15, what we call maybe the first revelation of the gospel, God says to Satan, the serpent, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. It must be the offspring of the woman, a man, a human, that must represent humanity and do battle with the serpent.

The Christ, the Messiah, that will save God's people, therefore must be someone who partakes in human flesh and blood. But what man descended of Adam will do this?

What man can do this? Psalm 49, verses 7 to 8 clearly teaches us, Truly, no man can ransom another or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice.

[6 : 06] No human being, he says, can afford to redeem another human being from death. Why? Because the wages of sin is death, and the price of a person's life is therefore too high for another man to bear.

In Ezekiel 14, 14, God says that when a land sins against him and by acting faithlessly to him, even if these three men, with the reputation of being perhaps the most righteous people, recorded in scripture, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, it says, God says, even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness.

God said of Noah in Genesis 6, 9, Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. In Daniel 6, 4, it tells us that Babylonian satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault because he was faithful and no error or fault was found in him.

And similarly, God says of Job, in Job 1a, there is none like him on all the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. So obviously they're still humans and so they're still sinful, but according to human standards, they're the cream of the crop, righteous, blameless, by all relative human standards.

And yet, even if those three men were to stand before God, to intercede before him for our sins, they could not redeem a single person because they cannot afford the price.

[7 : 51] And that's a big problem. But in Matthew 1, 18 to 25, we find God's elegant solution to this problem. Jesus the Christ, the messianic king, the prophesied king, is the God king.

He is the God man. He is fully man and fully God and so that he can save all of us from our sins.

That's the main point of this passage. We're going to look first at the humanity of the Christ. Secondly, the divinity of the Christ. And finally, we'll look at the salvation of the Christ. Matthew writes in verse 18, 19, Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.

When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

We're given several crucial details here. Mary was betrothed to Joseph. That means she was engaged, formally engaged to be married to him. They had not yet had their wedding and they had not yet physically consummated their marriage for that reason through sexual intercourse.

[9 : 04] That's why he says it's before they came together. But nonetheless, Mary was found to be with child. Meaning she was showing pregnant.

We know from Luke 1, 56, that Mary, after conceiving Jesus, goes to Elizabeth to stay with her, her cousin, because Elizabeth knows of her pregnancy, that it is from the Holy Spirit.

And so she kind of takes refuge with her. And it says that she stays with her for three months, Luke 1, 5, 156. And three months is about how long it takes before a woman starts to show the baby bump.

And after that three months, she comes home and then she's found out. But there was no sexual infidelity or promiscuity on her part.

We're told that she's witchcraft from the Holy Spirit. So this is a virgin conception. Mary conceived Jesus miraculously by the power of God while remaining a virgin.

[10:03] And I'll talk more about that later. But for now, I want us to think about the troubling implications of a virgin conception. What are people going to say?

No, really. I never slept with any man. Listen, this baby is from the Holy Spirit. How do you know that? I had a dream. I had a dream.

Yeah, right, Mary. Tell me, who's the man? Fess up. There will be suspicions of infidelity her entire life.

Jesus would be considered an illegitimate child by many. So much is implied in John 8 when the Jews falsely accused Jesus of being a Samaritan. Even though Joseph, his adopted father, is not Samaritan, clearly.

They accuse him of Samaritan, which means they're accusing him of being an illegitimate child. And they say to him, we were not born of sexual immorality. We have one father, even God.

[11:14] It's hard for Mary. Try also being in Joseph's shoes. Here is a woman that he loves, that he has pledged his troth to, saying, I love you and no other, and I'm going to marry you, and I'm going to provide for you and protect you for the rest of my life.

That woman that he cherishes, that he wants to spend the rest of his life with, before their wedding day, before they can enjoy conjugal relations, is pregnant. Things that would go through a man's mind in that situation.

The betrayal. The lack of trust. And according to Old Testament law, Deuteronomy 22, a woman who was discovered not to be a virgin, who had been unfaithful before the time of her wedding, there was capital punishment for that.

That's how seriously God takes the marriage union. The Jews couldn't enforce that penalty in the first century because they were under Roman rule, but that goes to show how grave this sin is.

And at this point, even though they can't execute the capital punishment, it's still an honor and shame culture. And the exposure of Mary's pregnancy would have brought endless shame to Joseph, and so he really has two options to save face.

[12:42] First option is to conceal Mary's pregnancy and become her accomplice. Maybe they hasten their wedding days to allay some suspicions, and they hide the baby for a little bit and act like this is his child.

Or, this would have been the more likely option, the most common option in a situation like this, he could expose Mary's infidelity and publicly bring shame in public divorce trial.

To say, I had nothing to do with this. It was all her. That would save his face, help him to get out of this quandary.

But Joseph opts for neither of these. It says in verse 19, her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

The word just is the same word that's translated often as righteous. It doesn't mean merciful or considerate. It means that Joseph was careful in keeping the Old Testament law.

[13 : 54] He was a righteous man. And because Joseph is a righteous and just man, he cannot marry someone who has been unfaithful, an adulterous woman. He must divorce her.

So that's what he decides to do. I'm gonna divorce her. However, Joseph is also a merciful man. And he says he is unwilling to put her to shame. So he resolved, instead of divorcing her publicly, to divorce her quietly.

The New International Version, which is an alternate translation, brings out the meaning of this more clearly in there, verse 19. It says, Because Joseph, her husband, was faithful to the law and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

That's the idea. And some of you might be wondering, well, if they were only engaged, why does he have to divorce her? Betrothal in those days was a much more serious and formal affair than nowadays.

Nowadays, people break off engagements fairly commonly. However, in those days, engagement is a formalized thing where you exchange the bride price.

[15 : 07] The man would give the bride price, which is basically the woman's inheritance. And if he should be unfaithful to her and divorce her, then she has something that she can take with her to provide for herself. And so they would exchange that already at the engagement.

And from that point on, they were bound to consider to be legally bound to one another. And they were referred to as husband and wife. And so breaking off the engagement at that stage was considered divorce, which is why Joseph resolves to divorce her.

But that's a problem here too, because he can't divorce her. If you remember why, remember from Jesus' genealogy last week, Matthew 1.16 says, Jacob, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

In order for Jesus to be the Christ, the prophesied messianic king descended from King David, he has to trace his line to King David. And his line to King David is traced not through Mary, but through Joseph.

Joseph has to take him as his child. Jesus' messianic kingship depends on it. And so the angel of the Lord intervenes in verse 20 and 21.

[16 : 25] Notice how the angel addresses Joseph. Joseph, son of David. This is why this is important. Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. It was the legal responsibility of the father in those days to name the child. And by naming the child, you lay claim on that child and acknowledge that child as your heir.

And that's the idea behind Isaiah 43.1, when God says to Israel, his people, and consequently to us, who are part of the new Israel in Jesus, I have called you by name.

You are mine. God's called his people by name. We are his, his heirs. And the angel addresses Joseph, son of David, to tell us what is at stake and tells him, despite his reservations, to take Mary as his wife and to adopt her son and name him Jesus.

Verses 24 to 25 tell us that Joseph obeyed the angel's commands. It says, when Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son.

[17 : 45] And he called his name Jesus. It's Jesus because of, because Joseph takes Mary as his wife and adopts Jesus.

He becomes a son of David through him. And this is amazing to me that God uses Mary and Joseph, who are mere humans, for such a grand, glorious, historic, significant event as the incarnation, the birth and lineage of the Messiah.

Can you imagine if Joseph, after the angel came to him and said, no way, angel of the Lord. No. I come from a respectable family.

Do you know I'm descendant of David? King David? I can't take her as my wife. The endless shame.

Disgrace. By every appearance, she's guilty of fornication and adultery. Can you imagine if Mary said to angel Gabriel, no way, a pregnancy?

[19 : 09] Right now? I'm a virgin. I'm not even married yet fully. You think Joseph's going to take me when I'm pregnant?

This is going to ruin my prospects for marriage. Not just that. It's going to ruin the rest of my life after I get abandoned by him.

Who's going to take me now? Salvation history hangs in the balance of this faithful man and this faithful woman.

Why would God take such a risk? Of course, in one sense, it's not a risk at all because the outcome is secure because God is sovereign and he's in full control over all of human history and every human decision.

But still, God did not have to use Joseph and Mary. In Acts 17.25, it says that God is not served by human hands as though he needed anything since he himself gives to all mankind life, breath, and everything.

[20 : 22] God doesn't need us for anything. He's not served by human hands. We're the ones who need him for everything. God does not need to use Joseph and Mary.

Yet he uses, and this is God's mode of operation, he uses fallible human beings to accomplish his infallible divine purposes.

And that's amazing. So many of you, and I'm so grateful for you, that so many of you are involved in serving our church in various ways.

So many of you are involved even outside of that in campus ministry and various missions organizations. Don't ever think that you are doing God a favor.

you're not doing something that he needs. He's doing you a favor, involving you in his plan, his great purposes.

[21 : 30] How is it? How is it? And I don't understand this. How is it that we, people like us, how is it that we get to partake in God's saving purposes throughout the world by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and making disciples of Jesus Christ?

How can it be that we get to be a part of that? And how can it be? This is biased to all of you in different sense, but how can it be that I get to stand here and expound God's word and preach to you week after week?

That's a privilege. We can't take that for granted. it's God's grace to involve us. And let's also appreciate the gritty humanity of Jesus' birth.

Look at, he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, yes, but he really is born of the Virgin Mary. She is called his mother in this chapter.

Matthew 1.16 says that Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born. Jesus was born as an offspring of the woman. Like all of us in this room, Jesus has a real human genealogy traced through his adopted father, Joseph.

[23 : 11] Jesus had a human upbringing. thinking, I want to note here that there is no mention of a Catholic doctrine of immaculate conception, claiming that Mary was born without original sin and never sinned personally.

Mary was not sinless. Jesus is the only sinless human. In fact, the claim that Mary was sinless and that only a sinless woman could give birth to Jesus runs in the face of Jesus' checkered genealogy, which we looked at last week.

Jesus embraces humanity in all of its sinfulness to raise them up to him. We saw in Jesus' genealogy that his ancestors were guilty of incest, murder, adultery, idolatry, child sacrifice, and even prostitution.

Jesus himself was without sin, yes, but he, nonetheless, in his person embraces the whole of humanity with all of its sordid and sinful history.

There's also no hint in this text of the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity, that Mary remained a virgin for the rest of her life.

[24 : 23] That's nowhere in Scripture. Verse 25 does not say that Joseph never slept with Mary, ever. It says Joseph knew Mary not until she had given birth to a son, which implies that after she gave birth to Jesus, they assumed normal, conjugal relations like any married couple.

people. That's why later on in chapter 13, verse 55 and 56, Matthew notes that Jesus has brothers and sisters, and these are not referring to spiritual brothers and sisters within the family of God, because in John 2, 12, it mentions Jesus' disciples separate from his brothers and his siblings.

Jesus had human parents, Jesus had human siblings, Jesus had a human upbringing because Jesus was fully human. And think about when the incarnation actually began.

When did God take on human flesh? The incarnation did not begin with the birth. It began with conception.

conception. God could have, imagine what that would have been like, God could have sent Jesus down as an adult. He could have written the cloud down just like he went up to the heavens.

[25 : 43] He could have written the cloud down in adult form and say, here I am. But instead, Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb.

Jesus was a human embryo. A pre-born child who went through all of the gestational stages. From the cradle to the grave, from the manger to the cross, Jesus embraced human life in its entirety.

from conception to death. As Hebrews 2 teaches us, in order to save us, Jesus had to be made like us in every respect.

He had to be man to represent man. He had to take on flesh and blood and become like us. Do you ever doubt that Jesus is really as merciful and gracious as God's word teaches us he is?

Think again, because Jesus was made like his brothers. This is from Hebrews 2.17. Jesus was made like his brothers in every respect so that he became a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

[27 : 00] He is merciful to us because Jesus gets us. he knows all of your and my frailties weaknesses.

He knows all of our limitations and because he does he has compassion. Do you ever doubt that Jesus faced the same kinds of temptation that we face?

Think again because Hebrews 4.15 says we do not have a high priest Jesus who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin.

Jesus has been there. Jesus knows the temptations you face and because he himself suffered when tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted.

There is no savior like Jesus. In fact Jesus is the only savior because he truly understands us because he has compassion on us because he truly represents us as man.

[28 : 17] There is only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. But Jesus wasn't only a man. He was also fully God.

He is the incarnate God, the son of God who has taken on human flesh. And we are told this in verse 18, verse 20, where we are told that he was conceived in Mary from the Holy Spirit.

And that is why verse 16 of the genealogy is careful to note. It does not follow the standard formula. If it followed the standard formula it would have said Joseph, the father of Jesus. It does not say that.

Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born. Joseph was his legal and adoptive father, but Jesus' real father is ultimately God the father.

No wonder Joseph was hesitant to approach Mary and sleep with her even after their marriage ceremony. It says in verse 24, 25, Joseph knew her not until she had given birth to a son.

[29 : 20] The word no is a biblical euphemism for conjugal relations. Matthew is making it extra clear that Jesus is not a child of Joseph through intercourse. Matthew is making it very clear.

In fact, what man, what faithful man, what believing man in his right mind, knowing that God is in Mary's womb, approached her.

Something sacred and holy has taken place. Something divine man. And notice how delicate and restrained Matthew is in his description of this.

It's very unlike any pagan accounts. Ancient Greco-Roman texts often tell lurid tales of Greco-Roman gods impregnating human women and then producing demigods, inferior deities who are half God and half man.

But such myths have more in common with the disobedient angelic beings taking human wives for themselves and giving birth to the Nephilim in Genesis 6 than the story of Jesus' conception and birth.

[30 : 35] Matthew's unadorned account is a stark contrast to these elaborate Greco-Roman mythologies. He carefully avoids any hint of any kind of sexual activity.

Jesus is not half God, half man. scripture everywhere and all of church history confirmed that Jesus is fully God and fully man. He's no demigod, he's no superhuman, he is God and he is man.

That which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. Jesus is born miraculously with two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, in the one person of Jesus Christ.

Christ. The prophecy from Isaiah 7, 14, which Matthew cites in verse 22 and 23 confirms this. Matthew is known for often citing the Old Testament and to demonstrate how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament.

He does this over ten times, uses this formula, this was to fulfill what the Lord spoke by so and so. That formula quotation is used over ten times in his gospel and five of those occur in the birth narrative.

[31 : 49] So Matthew is making it very clear to us, Jesus is the prophesied one. Jesus is the promised one. Jesus is the one who fulfills all of these promises.

And what did Isaiah 7, 14 prophesy? Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.

How specific can it get? A virgin conceives a child and this child is no ordinary child but this child is a God child, Emmanuel, God with us.

All of the Old Testament prophecies, when we read and from, we were singing Psalm 34 earlier and we were reading in the assurance of pardon also of how God is the one who is with us, the Lord of hosts is with us.

That phrase occurs so many times throughout all of the Old Testament. God is with us. And Imanu is the phrase in Hebrew that means God is with us. Imanu is with us, El is God, God with us.

[33 : 03] So all of those promises, everything that God has said to his people, I assure you, I am with you, I will not abandon you, I will not forsake you, all of that comes to ultimate fruition in Jesus who is Immanuel, God with us.

So he's fully God. This is why Jesus doesn't ever in the gospel stop people from worshiping him. All pious people recognize that there's only one true God and if you try to worship someone who is not God, that that is idolatrous.

So Peter in Acts 10 when Cornelius falls at his feet to worship him, oh you, you're this great apostle, one that God sent to me, they bowed down to him to worship him and then Peter lifts him up saying, stand up, I too am a man.

Peter knows this place. Even angels refuse to be worshipped. In Revelation 22, 8, 9, John falls to worship at the feet of an angel who is this glorious being and then the angel says to John, you must not do that.

I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers, the prophets and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God. But the Gospels, this is shocking, right?

[34 : 31] And this is where like, you know, when people come to you and say, oh, the Gospels in their original form never affirm that Jesus is the deity, that he is God. Only the Gospel of John, which was written later on, does this.

No, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John never do that. I don't know, maybe you've heard this in some of your college classes. Are you kidding me? Have you seen how many times people fall at Jesus' feet and bow down and worship him?

And he says nothing. Instead, they worship him, say, truly, you are the Son of God.

God. And Jesus says, yeah, you say that I am. That is who I am. Those things, those instances would be incredibly inappropriate if they weren't for Jesus' actual divinity.

But Jesus is fully God, and because he is Emmanuel, God with us, falling before his feet in worship and bowing before him is the only appropriate response.

[35 : 49] And that the deity of Christ, divinity of Christ, has important theological implications. For my third and final point, the salvation of the Christ, the angel who appears to Joseph says in verse 21, Mary will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

The name Jesus means the Lord saves. So if you wonder, is Jesus really a savior?

Yeah! That's his name! the Lord saves. He will save his people from their sins.

And we sing Jesus' name all the time. His name is on the lips of his people all the time in prayer. Every time we pray, we pray in Jesus' name.

Every time we sing, we sing to Jesus' name. And how sweet is that name that reminds us the Lord saves. Jesus could have had a lot of different names.

[37 : 02] The angel God could have told Joseph to name him Naziah. It's a cool name. It means conqueror. Yeah, Naziah, go conquer the Roman Empire.

Liberate your people. I don't know why I'm talking like this. Yeah. Or it could have been Daniel, which means God is judge.

That would have been true too. God could have sent Jesus to judge all of us as he rightly deserves to. But no, his name is Jesus.

The Lord saves. And we call out to his name every day. Jesus, my Jesus, I love you.

And what exactly does Jesus save us from? Verse 21 tells us he will save his people from their sins. And this brings God's entire salvation plan, his redemptive historical purposes to a focus with a crystal clear focus. The Jews at the time, they were expecting the Messiah to come, and they were expecting him to come and save them, but they were expecting him to come primarily to save them from the Roman oppressors, to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

[38 : 46] But Jesus's mission here, God is confirming through his angelic messenger, is far grander than that. The Roman Empire? Please. God has much bigger fish to fry. Jesus has come to save his people from their sins. Because the Jews, God's people were oppressed and conquered by many nations, right?

The Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and then the Romans. But these foreign nations were merely instruments of God's judgment. They were not the cause of their misfortune.

The true root cause of their misfortune was their sin, their unfaithfulness to God, their violation of their covenant with God, which led to these judgments, which are meant to bring them back to repentance.

So then nothing short of salvation from their sins can actually save them. This brings some helpful applications for our day and age, because in our day too, there's a lot of suffering.

There's a lot of oppression. There are a lot of things that people need to be saved from. Wars, natural disasters, international crises, climate catastrophes, epidemics, pandemics, economic depression, social injustices, world hunger.

[40 : 13] But there is one thing that is more urgent and more pressing and more consequential than any of these things that we must be saved from, and that is our sins.

Sin is the cause of our alienation from God. Sin is the reason for people's eternal damnation. Sin is the root cause of all hostility between races and genders and nations.

Sin is the reason why diseases and disasters and death have entered into our world. So my Christian brothers and sisters, do you give appropriate attention to dealing with sin in your life?

And do you give appropriate attention to proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, which is the only news that can deal with the sin around us and the sin of our neighbors?

Or are you more preoccupied with just the external circumstances of your life? Heart diseases, brain malformations, cancers, strokes, do not separate us from God.

[41 : 35] Sin does. And Jesus, our Savior, came to save us from our sins. Because Jesus was conceived and married from the Holy Spirit, apart from the sexual involvement of any man, the original sin that entered humanity through Adam, their head, is cut off, interrupted, as Romans 5, 12 tells us, uniquely in Jesus' birth.

Jesus is the first and only human to be born without sin. I'm excluding Adam because he wasn't born. He was created.

And Eve. 1 John 3, 5 says, You know that Jesus appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

This is because Jesus knew no sin. Only he can bear our sins so that we might become the righteousness of God, as 2 Corinthians 5, 21 says. This is essential for his saving work.

He has to be God who is without sin. Jesus is the one man who never deserved to die because death is a consequence of sin, and he had no sin.

[42 : 48] And yet Jesus died to save us from our sins. For those of you here who are not yet followers of Christ, what is your solution for sin?

Romans 6, 23 says, The wages of sin is death. Hebrews 9, 22 says, Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. You cannot pay for your sins apart from death.

That is an endless night. But the morning dawns with Christ who rises from the dead to give hope to all sinners.

Have you put your faith in the only Savior who can save you from your sins? And there are exhortations here for believers as well.

Jesus did many good works during his time on earth. He healed the sick and raised the dead. Jesus' central mission, however, always was to give his life as a ransom for many, to save his people from their sins.

[44 : 05] Likewise, I want you all as God's people to love your neighbors as yourself, to do many good works wherever you are, to do your work with excellence in honor of the Lord, in your classrooms, in the libraries, in the labs, in the courts, in the banks, in the offices, in the studios, and in your homes, and in the marketplaces.

I want you to honor God and do good to your neighbors and love your neighbors, to abound in all good works. But the central mission of the Church of Christ is to proclaim Jesus Christ who saves us from our sins.

And that's how we join him in his mission. I don't want us to ever forget that. Also, I want to address those of you who feel that maybe there are some sins in your life that Jesus is not quite able to deal with.

I know you don't think that in your head, theoretically, but you think that in your heart. You think that in the way you approach God because you approach him thinking, ah, he doesn't really want to spend time with me.

He's not really pleased with me. Yeah, maybe back then when my faith was new and I was zealous and I became a fresh Christian, but I've sinned so many times since then.

[45 : 30] Again, and again, and again, how can God possibly love me? How can that really be forgiven?

Surely there's a limit. If Jesus died and that's it, then you might have something.

But Jesus died and he was raised and he ascended to the right hand of the Father where God's word teaches us that he is now making intercession for us.

I want you to get this because this is so important. Romans 8, 33 to 34. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

[46 : 34] Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father and he is there interceding for us. Similarly, Hebrews 7, 24 to 26 tells us that because Jesus is a high priest who lives forever, he didn't die like the earthly human high priests.

He lives forever because he's raised from the dead and he's at the right hand of the Father. He is exalted above the heavens. He says, consequently, it says, he's able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Maybe you think God saves you partway. Sometimes I've had this interaction. I think my kids one time, family worship asked me, well, did, are we forgiven because of Jesus, what he did, are we forgiven all our future sins too?

I'm like, well, that's not exactly the right way to think about it, right? Because we are called to confess our sins to be forgiven. So it's not that God forgives you beforehand of all your future sins.

However, the basis for the forgiveness of all of your future sins is purchased at the cross. And now, at the right hand of the Father, moment by moment, with every sin, with every failure, Jesus intercedes for you.

[48 : 01] I died for that sin. Oh, here comes another one. I died for that sin. Here comes another one. Yes, I died for that sin. I died for that sin. Interceding on your behalf right now at the right hand of the Father.

Isn't that amazing? So if you doubt that Jesus saves you to the uttermost, to the end, completely, Jesus is a complete Savior.

He is a whole Savior. You doubt that, then remember that. He saves to the uttermost because He is right now at the right hand of the Father interceding for you.

Jesus saves. The Lord saves. Emmanuel, God with us, and He will save His people from their sins. Hallelujah.

Father, thank You so much for Your love in sending Jesus to us. We are so loved. So loved. More love than we can know.

[49 : 07] More love than we will ever fully grasp. And I ask God that by Your grace You will help my brothers and sisters here to grasp that love a little bit better today. And I ask that by Your mercy that You will save those in this room who do not yet know Your great love.

All glory belongs to You, Father. Salvation is of You from the beginning to the end. So glorify Yourself in saving sinners today.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.