

Who Do You Say I Am?

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[0:00] I'll read from Matthew's Gospel, chapter 16, Matthew chapter 16, and I'll begin reading at verse 13.

! This is the Word of God. When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do people say the Son of Man is?

They replied, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. But what about you, he asked, who do you say that I am?

Simon Peter answered, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus replied, blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

[1:09] Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Never, Lord, he said. This shall never happen to you. Jesus turned and said to Peter, get behind me, Satan.

You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.

Who is the most important person that has ever lived in all of human history?

We've been singing about him this morning. He is Jesus of Nazareth, isn't he? And he's not just a myth, a fable, a story told in order to make some lessons clear to us.

[2:23] He really lived on this planet in space-time history. He was born. He grew up. He walked those dusty roads of Palestine over there in the Middle East.

He taught. He worked miracles. He suffered and died, was buried, rose again, and never lives at the Father's right hand in his coming again in glory.

And for many centuries, most of the world has testified to his unique importance in human history by dating historical events in relation to the traditional birthday of Jesus Christ.

So we speak of Moses as having lived 1,500 years B.C., before Christ. Now, you and I live in 2026. It's 2,026 years A.D. after Christ. And some of you kids say, now, wait a minute. You mean A.C. after Christ.

[3:27] Well, no, I don't. We got fancy and went into Latin when we went A.D., anno domini, in the year of our Lord. But it was the testimony that Jesus Christ, his entrance into this world, was the historical event of all the ages.

But not everyone agrees on this question of who Jesus is. And as we'll see, this was a big problem even while Jesus was on the earth.

Even among his own disciples, you remember, after Jesus had worked that miracle on the troubled sea, when they thought they were drowning and Jesus spoke and all became calm.

And the disciples were terrified and asked, what kind of man is this that even the wind and the waves obey him? At that point in their understanding of who Jesus is, they had more questions than answers.

Who is this? So there was and there remains today a problem understanding who Jesus is. Many widely differing ideas about him.

[4:42] And yet, nothing is more important about you and about me than understanding who Jesus is and knowing him personally.

So today we're beginning a new sermon series entitled, Who is Jesus Christ? Now, right up front, I want you to know my purpose statement for studying this, studying Christ.

The first, I have two purposes. The first is an evangelical purpose, an evangelistic purpose. That every single one of you might know this Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

To know the real Jesus. Not the Jesus as I like to think of him. That Jesus will save no one. It's the Jesus revealed in scriptures that saves sinners.

And I want you to know him. Not just the doctrine of Jesus, though that is important. Not just to know some facts about Jesus.

[5:51] That will not save you. The demons know a lot of facts about Jesus. More than most men do. And they are not saved. No, my aim and my purpose is that you might come to know this Jesus of the Bible as your own Lord and Savior.

And be able to say, he's my Savior. He's my Lord. He's the one I'm putting all my trust for heaven upon. And I'm now going to follow him the rest of my life.

Well, that's the purpose. You know, that's why God gave us the Bible. That we might know who Jesus is. We might know him. It's why John wrote his gospel.

He says, Jesus did many other things than what are recorded in this book. But he says, these are written so that, here's the purpose, so that you may believe that he is the Christ, the Son of God. And that by believing you may have life in his name. That you might know him as your Lord and Savior and possess eternal life in him.

[6:59] So that's the first purpose. I have a second purpose, which is for believers. And that is to hold before you the excellencies of the Lord Jesus as he's presented to us in the scriptures, so that we might worship him aright, as we just heard the importance of worshiping our God aright.

We must know our Savior if we're to worship him for who he is and what he is to us personally. And then that beholding his excellencies, we might be attracted to his glory.

And by beholding his glory, we might be transformed ourselves from one stage of glory to another, into his same likeness, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Because something wonderful happens as we get to know Jesus better. The more we know him, the more we love him. The more we trust and obey him.

The more we please him, the closer we follow him, the more we enjoy him. And long to see him face to face. There's nothing more healthy and life-giving to our spiritual being than knowing Jesus better.

[8:22] So you ready to dig in? Who is Jesus Christ? We start in Matthew 16, verse 13, the text read for us. And here our Lord is coming to the end of his three years of public ministry.

He's gone around preaching, teaching, working miracles for some three years. And now he's way up north, north of the Sea of Galilee, way north of Jerusalem, in an area of Caesarea Philippi.

And it's while he was there that he turns to his disciples and asks, who do people say that the Son of Man is? Kids, that's one of the titles for Jesus.

It's his favorite way of referring to himself as the Son of Man. Pastor Colin will open that up for us in chapter 7 of Daniel.

He is the Son of Man. What Jesus is asking then is, who do people say that I am? I'm the Son of Man. Well, the answers are many.

[9:28] Some say John the Baptist. He was the last of all the Old Testament prophets, the one that was to introduce Jesus to Israel. You remember King Herod had beheaded John the Baptist.

But when he heard about Jesus, he concluded that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead to torment him. We see something of what a guilty conscience does to a man.

And it wasn't just Herod. There were others that thought, this must be John the Baptist. Indeed, their message was identical in one sense.

They both preached, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It's here. It's here in the coming of the king. And so they conclude, it's John the Baptist.

Others said, no, no, it's Elijah. He's Elijah. Remember, Elijah did not die, kids. He was caught up to heaven in a whirlwind, the Bible says. And Elijah did a lot of miracles.

[10:32] And here is Jesus doing a lot of miracles. And the last chapter of the Old Testament, at least in the order that we have it, Malachi 4 and verse 5, the Lord says, see, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.

They were looking for Elijah. So this is Elijah. Others said, no, no, no. This is Jeremiah. And so they have a diverse opinion on who this Jesus of Nazareth is or one of the other prophets.

And Jesus, like all the prophets, was sent to call Israel to repent, to turn back to God. And that is what Jesus was doing.

Well, these were the most common ideas that were circulating at that time as to who Jesus was.

We know some were asking, could this be the Messiah?

Others were saying, yes, he is the Christ. But at this moment, Jesus was keeping that hidden from the masses and was only revealing it to a few. And we also know that the religious establishment had already concluded that Jesus was a phony prophet, a false prophet leading the nation astray.

[11:50] And we're about to make that charge before the Sanhedrin and have him crucified for claiming to be Messiah. Well, what do these three opinions of Jesus, John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, what do they all have in common?

Well, they all think of Jesus as a prophet. A prophet. Either one of the prophets returned to earth living here again or one in the likeness of the prophets.

But they overlooked his uniqueness and just viewed him as one of the prophets, one in the long line of prophets. You know, the Muslims view Jesus that way.

He's one of the prophets that Allah sent. But it's then with all this confusion about him that Jesus turns to the twelve and says, but you, who do you say that I am?

And I want you to hear Jesus asking that question directly to you. What about you? Who do you say I am? What am I to you? It's a very personal issue, isn't it?

[13:03] And it's meant to be. It's no theoretical question without any consequences attached to it. It's not something for a few theologians to wrestle with in their seminary debates.

No, this is something you and I must answer. An answer to God for. And according to Jesus, our answer to this question could determine our eternal destiny, either in heaven or hell.

I get that from John chapter 8, where Jesus had been making some amazing claims for himself. He says, I came from heaven. God is my father and he sent me to you.

And I have eternal life to give to whoever believes in me. And the Jewish leaders were incensed and they were pushing back.

They were objecting to his claims. They were denying them. And in John 8, 23 and 24, Jesus responds, you are from below. I am from above.

[14:05] You are of this world. I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins. If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will die in your sins.

So he claimed to be God. He claimed to do God like things, to create all things, to forgive sin, to judge the world, to determine the eternal destinies of heaven and hell, to be the only way to the father.

And on top of all his claims, Jesus adds, and if you don't believe that I am who I say I am, you will die in your sins.

There are consequences to this question. It's not a test you can afford to fail. To die in your sins, that means that at the end of your life, you're still in your sins and you die in your sins.

That means that you then appear before the judge, still in your sins. Sins unforgiven, unatoned for, unpunished. Sins crying out for justice.

[15:15] What a horrible state to die in. But it is the ultimate arrogance and rebellion to refuse to believe that Jesus is who he claimed to be.

And such will find no mercy in the day of judgment. Having rejected him, he will reject them as they've judged themselves unworthy of eternal life.

So we're back to Matthew 16, 15. This is not an unimportant question. Enough about what others say about me. What about you?

Who do you say that I am? And Peter often is the first to answer for the 12, and this time he gets it right. You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

Now those are two titles of Jesus that tell us so much about who he is. And we'll look at that, Lord willing, beginning next week. But for now, I just want you to see two lessons about getting to know Jesus, about understanding who Jesus is.

[16:24] The first lesson is that a true understanding of Jesus is a supernatural thing. It's a supernatural thing. You can have the highest IQ.

You can study the Bible every year, reading it through, reading commentaries. You can have a degree in theology. You can go to church and Sunday school every Sunday. You can hear sermons and lessons on the Bible and still not have a saving knowledge of who Jesus is. Still not know him. Notice what Jesus says to Peter immediately, following on the heels of his correct confession of who Jesus is.

You're the Christ, the Son of the living God. And verse 17, Jesus says, blessed, blessed are you, Simon. For this was not revealed to you by man, by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. You didn't figure it out for yourself, Peter. Nor did a human teacher teach you or reveal it to me. It's not that you were a little smarter than your neighbor who just doesn't get it.

[17:39] not at all. The only reason you know who I am, Peter, is because my Father revealed it to you. You've been blessed.

Blessed are your eyes because they see. Jesus says in Matthew 11, 27, no one knows the Son except the Father.

And no one knows the Father except the Son and He to whom the Son reveals Him. You see, the Father and the Son, they're two persons in the one Godhead.

They've lived face to face for all eternity. They know each other fully. And no one knows the one without the other revealing Him to us.

You can't know Jesus unless the Father reveals His Son to you. And He says, that's what I've done just here to you, Peter. Now that word reveal means to uncover, to unveil something that is hidden.

[18:44] Think of a city that's hired a sculptor to make a sculpture for the city. And He does it all in private and under the secrecy of His workshop and then He covers it with a veil and He brings it to the town center, sets it up, and one day there's an unveiling in which the statue is revealed and the sheet is pulled off and He's revealing what the statue is.

And the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 3, 4, 3, if our gospel is veiled, it's veiled to those who are perishing. for the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.

They can be looking at Jesus, they can be eating the food that He multiplied, they can be seeing His miracles, and they're still blind and cannot see the glory of God in that person, Jesus, that He's full of glory, of truth, and grace.

The God of heaven must reveal Him to us. So, the human intellect left to itself is not sufficient to know the truth of Jesus in a saving way.

And that's because of the fall of man that we saw last week. It's affected man's thinking and it shrouded the mind in darkness about the things of Christ.

[20:27] We sang it, holy, holy, holy. Though the darkness hide thee, though the eyes of sinful man thy glory cannot see.

They can't see His glory. Their mind is shrouded in darkness, Ephesians chapter 2 or chapter 4. We were darkened in our understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in us due to the hardening of our hearts.

That's why so many people and religions and churches and professing Christians do not believe the truths about Jesus, that He is God, God in the flesh, the Creator who became man, that He alone can save them by His life and death and resurrection.

They don't believe because the God of this age has blinded them and they cannot see the glory of God in the face of Christ. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1, 21, the world by its wisdom, the highest philosophers of this world, the world by its wisdom did not know God.

He must reveal Himself to fallen man. 1 Corinthians 2, 14, the man without the Spirit, without the Holy Spirit, does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to them and He cannot understand them because those things are spiritually discerned and He doesn't have the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to teach Him.

[22:07] It takes a supernatural teaching of God, the Holy Spirit, to show us who Jesus is. The Spirit reads with us the Holy Scriptures and reveals our risen Lord.

The Spirit takes the things of Christ and makes them real to us so we know this is who Jesus is.

And that's why unconverted man without the Spirit doesn't accept the teachings about Jesus even though they're in our Bibles.

They sound like foolishness to them. How can a man dying on a cross 2,000 years ago change my eternal destiny from hell to heaven?

That's stupid. That's foolishness. And He will not believe it because He doesn't understand it. You know, the God of this age has blinded His mind and He cannot see.

That's a word of ability. He has no ability to see glory in Jesus Christ such that He would want Him more than His sins. So Jesus tells Nicodemus who comes to interview Jesus at night and He flips the tables on Him right away and says, listen, Nicodemus, you've come to ask me about me.

[23 : 29] I'm going to tell you something about you. I tell you the truth. Unless you are born again, you cannot see. You cannot discern. You cannot understand something spiritual like the kingdom of God, much less ever enter into it.

You cannot see it. You cannot perceive it. You're blind. You need to be born again. You need new eyes, a new mind, unveiled. The veil has to be pulled away.

That's something God must do. And Nicodemus, his response is, I don't understand. Exactly. That's what Jesus has been telling you.

You can't understand it. How can an old man enter back into his mother? Surely not that. Yes, he needs to have God reveal spiritual truths to him by the Spirit.

That's why he must be born again. And that's not something Nicodemus can do to himself. No one births themselves.

[24 : 35] It's something someone else did to them. We have four new babies around here. If they're all here today. But I know this about every one of them. They did not birth themselves.

They were given birth. They were passive. Mommy was active. And only the Spirit gives life, Jesus says to Nicodemus. The flesh counts for nothing.

No, you must be born of the Spirit. You must be born from above. The new birth is his work. And you didn't choose it. James 1.18, he chose to give us new birth through the word of truth.

1 Peter 1.3, praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth. A birth we didn't deserve, a birth we did not seek, but he gave it by grace.

And so Nicodemus, you can't see because you need to be born again. And here's the beauty about the gospel, that just as the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light, there is a revealing that takes place by the power of the Spirit.

[25 : 50] A supernatural work, just as supernatural as the first day of creation. And so 2 Corinthians 4.6 follows up on the blinding of men's eyes by saying, for the God who said at the first creation, let there be light, and there was light, that same God, now in the new creation, has made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the glory of God.

Where? In the face of Jesus Christ. There I see now the glory of God because God the Father has made his light shine in our hearts.

So that's the first lesson. A true understanding of Jesus is a supernatural thing. Have you seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? Have you seen so clearly that you've bowed the knee before him and confessed to him that you're a sinner and Jesus is your only hope of salvation? If not, then ask him to reveal Christ to you and to show you how Christ can meet your greatest need. And if you do know Jesus, never take for granted again the fact that you do know him. It's a miracle that you know him. You could still be in darkness like most of the world today.

[27 : 24] So bow and worship and thank the Lord for revealing Christ to you. And forever pray as you come to the scriptures, open my eyes further that I may see wonderful things about Jesus in your law.

Well, that's the first lesson. The second lesson is the true understanding of Jesus is not only a supernatural thing, it's a progressive thing. The Heavenly Father doesn't reveal everything about his Son all at once.

It's rather little by little. And we don't need to look far from our passage to see this. Peter had just, had God the Father revealed to him that Jesus is the Messiah.

What happens next? Well, Jesus begins to explain Messiah's mission. what he came to do. Verse 21 of Matthew 16. From that time on, Jesus began to explain.

We've shifted into a new phase in the school of Jesus. He's now going to explain. You know that I'm Messiah? Let me tell you what I've come to do. Verse 21. From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law.

[28 : 40] And that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Does Peter know who Jesus is? Yes, by the revelation of the Father to him.

Jesus affirms that he does. Does Peter know Messiah's mission? Well, he's just had Jesus tell him. Does he know it? Does he accept it?

Does he realize it? I'll let you decide. Verse 22. Jesus, or Peter, took him aside and began to rebuke him. Never, Lord, he said. This shall never happen to you.

He understands clearly enough Jesus is the Messiah. But he doesn't have a clue yet about what he came to do. Because the revelation of Christ is a progressive thing.

Jesus shows him one thing, but he's not shown him everything. He's learned A, B, C, but there's a lot more to the gospel alphabet. There's much more to come.

[29:40] And so he's in an infant stage of understanding about Messiah's mission. Oh, but turn over to Acts 2 and hear him preach on the day of Pentecost and you see that he has learned more about who Jesus is.

And he preaches it boldly. Read his two epistles at the end of your New Testament and you'll find that the Holy Spirit has been revealing more and more to this Peter.

And it's not just Peter. It's that way with Thomas. Doubting Thomas who's able to come with declaration after the resurrection. My Lord and my God.

And so it is with you and I, believers. Our knowledge of who Jesus is is progressive because God's revelation of Christ is progressive.

He doesn't tell us everything about him in the opening book. We read in chapter 3 and verse 15 of Genesis that he will be the seed of the woman and he'll crush the head of the serpent.

[30:48] But that's a bit vague. I mean, if you knew nothing but that, you'd still be saying, what? And so as you continue reading through the Old Testament, as God began to reveal more and more about who Jesus is, it becomes more and more clear.

So that by the time we come to the end of our Bibles, we know everything that we need to know about Jesus Christ. Not saying that we know everything.

I think all heaven will never exhaust that, but we'll know everything we need to know, to know him personally as our Lord and Savior. Is that not true of your life?

When you first came to know Jesus, you found him amazing, didn't you? This is awesome. This Jesus of Nazareth, this God and man, one person, two nature, this is awesome.

But you know him much better today than you did then, don't you? Day by day, week in, week out, year in, year out, he's been revealing more and more of himself to you in the scriptures.

[32:05] And he's more precious to you now than he was then. He's sweeter as the years go by. Not because he's changing and getting sweeter, but because the Father is revealing more of his son to you in the scriptures.

You find him sweeter and sweeter as the years go by. Who do you say that I am? Oh, Jesus, you're everything to me.

My God, my Savior, my Lord, my Master, my Creator, my Provider, my Deliverer, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Great. I am the one who was and is and is to come the Eternal One, my life, the truth, my only way to the Father, the author and perfecter of my faith, my hope of glory, my joy, my mediator, my prophet, my priest, my king, my sacrificial Lamb of God, my substitute, my suffering servant of Jehovah, my Good Shepherd, the Son and Shield, my Defender, my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, my redemption, my strength, my song, my salvation, my Bridegroom and Friend and Guide and Example, my Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting God, Everlasting Father, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, the Overseer of My Soul, My Inheritance, My Portion, My Reward, My All in All, All You Are for All I Need.

You see, there's so much more to who Jesus is and we're going to look more closely at some of these titles and offices that Jesus has as we answer this question, Who is Jesus Christ?

[34:12] that though God has given us this wonderful revelation of His Son in the Bible, man's wickedness is seen in that the greater part of mankind does not want to know Jesus.

Job explains their heart's response. Chapter 21, 14, they say to God, leave us alone. We have no desire to know your ways.

Now, they may never say that with their lips, but that's what their lives are saying every day of their life. They don't go to church. They don't read their Bibles. If they do, they yawn.

The whole thing is boring. We have no desire to know your ways. Oh, football? Sports? Fitness? Clothes?

Houses? Cars? Money? Food? Movies? Entertainment? Now I'm all alert. I'm all in on this now. But Jesus?

[35:15] They're content to live their entire lives without Him, without knowing Him. He's irrelevant. He means nothing to them in their everyday life. He might as well have never existed as far as its effect upon their lives.

And that makes one thing perfectly clear. They don't know Jesus. How do we know that? Because if they did, they'd want to know Him more. Now it's not like that with everyone, is it?

Some people, you see Him from a distance and you say, I'd like to get to know that guy. And the closer you get, the more you say, I don't think I want to know any more about that guy. But it's never that way.

Never that way about Jesus. I don't care who you are. The more you know Him, the more you want to know about Him. Why? Because He's altogether lovely.

There is nothing put-offish about this Jesus. Only that which attracts us like a magnet to Him. So the more you get to know Him, the more you want to know Him.

[36:18] More about Jesus would I know. More, more, more about Jesus. Is that you? If not confess your sin of not wanting to know Him.

Maybe that will be the beginning of showing you that you don't have the most precious reality in the world to know the most important person, the Savior, the only Savior God sent into the world to save sinners.

Confess to Him. Cry out to Him. Maybe you do know Him, but you've been neglecting Him. Peter, who would remind us in his epistles of many important things, ends his last epistle this way.

But grow. Grow. Growth is a sign of life. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Don't be complacent. Don't be satisfied with what you do know of Him. But grow. Are you growing in your knowledge? Are you advancing? Are you increasing? Do you know Him better today than you did last year at this time?

[37:30] Do you know Him better today than you did the first day you came to know Him? You say, well, how do I get to know Him? The same way you get to know anyone else. You spend time with them, don't you?

You talk to them. You reveal something of yourself to them. They reveal themselves to you. It's the same with Jesus. He speaks to us in His Word. And He's revealing Himself to us here.

And we speak to Him. And we're getting to know Him intimately, having real, regular, intimate fellowship with Jesus, communion with Christ, heart-to-heart dealings with the living God.

So we know Him. We're doing all of life not only for Christ, but with Christ. Ever at our sight. I love the account of Andrew and John recorded in the first chapter of John.

Did you know they were disciples of John the Baptist before they were disciples of Jesus? And one day, they were with John the Baptist and Jesus walks by and John says, behold, there is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

[38:33] And John and Andrew start following Jesus. And Jesus realizes someone's following Him. And He turns around and says, what do you want? And they said, Rabbi, teacher, where are you staying?

He said, come. Come and you will see. And John tells us they went and saw where He was staying and spent the day with Jesus.

And they were never the same after that. A day spent with Jesus. They became lifelong followers of Jesus. No longer following John the Baptist.

Now it's all Jesus. John would say, yes, I must decrease. He must increase. Follow Him, man. And they did. They had met the Messiah.

Do you realize that our privilege today and every day is to spend the day with Jesus? No, not physically, but spiritually? His Spirit? Lives in us?

[39:38] Are you aware of that? Are you conscious of it throughout your day? Are you talking to Him? Are you listening to Him? Throughout the day we can spend the day with Jesus.

Just as Enoch and Noah and others were said to have walked with God. They walked with God.

You see two lovers, they're walking with each other and they're talking back and forth.

Enoch and Noah walked with God so you can walk with Jesus. And spend the day with Him. And the first thing Andrew did after spending that day with Jesus was to find his brother, Simon Peter,

and tell him, we have found the Messiah.

And he brought him to Jesus. People who know this Jesus want others to know Him as well. It's a secret too good to keep to yourself. And these disciples, Andrew and John and Peter and the others, they got to walk with Jesus in the flesh for three years.

and they got to know Jesus better. And then Jesus left them and went into heaven. But that was not the end of their fellowship and communion with Him.

[40:43] Listen to what John says in his first epistle. He says, our fellowship is, present tense, with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

They were still walking and talking with Him, though He's in heaven now. And that's available to every follower of Jesus Christ today to hold daily communion with Jesus Christ.

Because in the written Word, He who is the living Word of God comes and speaks to us. And we hold fellowship with Him by pouring out our hearts to Him.

Think of the Apostle Paul. Well, Jesus said, whoever has my commands and obeys them, he's the one who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father.

And I too will love him and show myself to him. There's a promise. Jesus says, I'll reveal myself. I'll show myself to you. Think of the Apostle Paul. He tells us in Philippians 3.10, I want to know Christ.

[41:51] We might say, Paul, didn't you meet him on the road to Damascus 25 years ago? Didn't you talk to him? Face to face. And didn't you receive the Gospel that you have been preaching for 25 years from Him directly in Arabia?

And haven't you been caught up to the third heaven where you heard inexpressible words? And haven't you been preaching Christ for 25 years? And he would say, yes, but that's just the trouble. The more I know Christ, the more I see there is to know about Him. And the more I know Him, the better, the more I want to know about Him. I want to know Christ.

Are you still panting after knowing Jesus better like the Apostle Paul? Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary has compiled the largest library of the Puritan writings.

By entering them all onto the computer, they found, what is the Scripture verse most often quoted by the Puritans? It will tell you something about their hearts.

[42:59] It was John 17, 3. This is eternal life. To know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

This is life. This is life abundant. This is eternal life. It begins here and now, knowing the Father and the Son, and then continuing through all eternity.

Paul had tasted the sweetness of growing acquaintance with Christ, and he wants all other Christians to experience it in increasing measures. So he writes to the Colossians, and he says, we've never stopped praying for you since we heard about you, that you might be ever growing in the knowledge of God.

Getting to know God more and more. Getting to know Christ. He tells the Ephesians, he's praying for them to have power together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

And to know this love that surpasses knowledge. Brothers and sisters, there's more of Christ and his love to know. So keep plumbing the depths of his infinite love.

[44:13] The hymn writers love to speak about Christ's love as a bottomless ocean. It's beyond, surpasses knowing. It's infinite. And so think of an ocean, and you're told it's a bottomless ocean.

Does that make you just sit there in your boat and say, oh, okay. Wow, that's deep. Or is there a way to plumb something of the depths of that bottomless ocean even though you don't get to the bottom?

And so you take an anchor and you take a rope that's a mile long and you tie it to that anchor and you start lowering it into the ocean. And it never hits the bottom.

You know a little bit more about what it means that this is a bottomless ocean. So the next day you get another mile long rope and you tie it onto the other one.

You keep lowering it at the end of the second day. You know a little more about just how deep this ocean is. And so it goes day after day at the end of the year.

[45:12] Who knows more about the bottomless ocean? The man who sits in his boat and just reads, oh, it's a bottomless ocean. Or the man who has every day let down a mile long rope and never hit the bottom.

Some of you have been walking with Christ for 50 years. And you've been letting down the rope. You've heard that the love of Christ is beyond knowing.

It's a bottomless ocean. And you haven't just sat there in your boat and said, wow. No, you have been living on the love of Christ. And you're letting down your rope and you're reading in the Bible. He loved me before time. He set his love on me. He's drawn me with cords of love. Oh, amazing love. How can it be? And then you get to the cross. How can it be that Jesus, my God, would die for me?

And you see, you're letting down the rope. And you see his love and his answers to your prayers. You've been at wit's end. And you cry out to God for mercy.

[46:24] And Jesus draws near. And you're tasting his love. Another day. Another day. You're loaded down, burdened with your sin. And you come to Jesus.

And though you're weary and burdened, he welcomes you to come and confess your sin. And you're learning of his love. And you're grieving. You're lost.

You're sorrows. And nothing can comfort you. And you come to Jesus. And he says to your soul, I'm yours. And your heart is at rest once more in that unending love.

You're fearful. And he comes to you and says, fear not. It is I. It is I. What happens every time you let out the rope?

The more you lean into the love of God, the love of God in Jesus, you are growing in your appreciation of just how deep and wide and high and long this love is.

[47:27] Well, let's keep plumbing the depths, brothers and sisters. because the more we get to know him and his love, the more we'll love him, worship him, serve him, trust, obey, fear him, reverence him, follow him.

Let's pray. Our God, you are good and all you do is good and we ask that you shine that goodness upon us in this study by teaching us more of our Savior.

Cause us those who know you to know you better and to serve you more wholeheartedly. Cause those who don't know you to come to know you even as we study these things.

We ask it for your praise and our good in Jesus' name. Amen. Speaking of our Savior, Peter says, though you have not seen him, you know him and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

Why? Because you're receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your soul. Amen. Amen. Amen.