

Let's Talk About Jesus!

March 4, 2018 Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins

This morning as I turned on my computer, my attention was drawn to a video of a celebrity calling our vice-president mentally ill because he has a relationship with Jesus Christ. I watched the video of several women joking and laughing about the comment that Jesus talks to him. It seems that a portion of our society is driven by hate and animosity towards Christianity and those who uphold Biblical values and standards are placed in a category of mental instability. However, today I want to talk about Jesus. I'm thankful that we still have the freedom to preach, to proclaim and to spread the gospel but I wonder what the future brings for our country.

What was it about Jesus that has compelled people to be so devoted to him that his disciples would die rather than to forsake his teachings or deny his claim of deity? What was it about him that Saul who was so zealous to destroy the infant church that Jesus established, turned about face and suffered persecution, imprisonment, torture, threats of death, and finally martyrdom for his sake? He, who had at one time persecuted others causing them to be put to death for their faith, after he had met Jesus on the road to Damascus seeking to broaden his scope of persecuting believers, became the hunted rather than the hunter.

What was it about this figure that would compel a Yugoslavian nun to spend her life bringing comfort to the dying in Calcutta?

Some of the greatest architectural achievements in Europe were built for worship to Him. Some of the world's most beautiful art was created to honor him. Some of the world's most glorious music was written in praise to Him. Rome crucified Him, but 167 years later He was acknowledged as the only God of the Roman Empire. 2000 years after his ascension, people from all walks of life testify to his power to deliver them from drugs, illness, suicide attempts, depression and hopelessness. Since his appearance on earth, people from generation to generation have forsaken personal gain to feed the hungry, house the homeless, clothe those who are naked, and healed the sick. Since His ascension, the calendar was changed to mark the years before and after He came to this earth. Why are people willing to leave the comforts of their homelands, their families, and everything familiar to them to travel around the world spreading the news of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Why is there so much persecution and hatred aimed at stamping out all mention of His name and His Holy Book around our world?

Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1 start out with the same words "In the beginning" . Genesis states that God created the heaven and the earth. John declares that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning and this Word created everything that was created and nothing was created except through Him. The Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us. He was, is and always will be a living person with a mind, will, emotion, and intellect for He is eternal.

He existed before time, space, the universe, and history. Out of the heart the mouth speaks and Jesus spoke and his words transformed the formless, water submerged earth into a beautiful place suitable for man and every living creature and plant life to be sustained. He alone has power to change the heart of man, to cleanse a soul from sin, and to set captives from the bondage of sin. That power has the ability to transform you and me into holy, productive sons and daughters of God.

The same God that brought judgment onto the earth by a flood saved Noah and his family and a remnant of all living creatures. God gave Noah instructions to build an ark, and the same God called us to accept his offer of salvation from the coming judgment at the end of time. Those who have faith to believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of all who seek Him will be protected from the coming judgment that is ahead to all those who have rejected his offer and rebelled against Jesus Christ. Destruction is coming to those who have mocked his holy name and have not repented.

God called Abraham out of his country and away from his family to a land that He had promised him. He was promised many blessings because of his faith and obedience to God and that same Lord has called us out of this world and promised us blessings as we follow him in a life of obedience and faith in Jesus Christ.

The same God that delivered his people out of the cruel bondage of Egypt and led them to the Promised land of Canaan flowing with milk and honey came to this earth to give his life's blood for a ransom that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin and be given the gift of eternal life.

The same God that elevated David, the shepherd boy to sit on the throne over his people, Israel, is the same Jesus who called lowly fishermen, tax collectors, prostitutes, demon possessed people, and sinners to follow him and become fishers of men. These people will one day judge the angels and hold high positions in the kingdom of God. He promises to elevate those who humble themselves before Him and He will give them a calling and a purpose and in the end the wonderful gift of eternal life in his everlasting kingdom. He promises to reward those who are faithful over the little things by making them rulers over larger things.

The same God that protected Rahab, the prostitute from Jericho, who by faith hid the spies of Israel, is the same God that delivers us from the bondage of sin, cleanses us and replaces our ragged, soiled garments with robes of righteousness. Rahab and her family were spared when the city was destroyed and Rahab married into the tribe of Judah, the bloodline of Jesus Christ. Don't give up and quit trying because of your failures in life. Jesus Christ created us and He knows everything about us. He has the answers to all of our problems and there is nothing too hard for Him. He can fix the problem areas of your life and give you love, joy and peace in the place of bitterness, anger, and pain. He is able and willing to set you free and give you hope for the future.

Luke 4:18 says “The spirit of the LORD is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the LORD.” When He had finished reading, he passed the book to the minister and sat down. All eyes were riveted on him. He said, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears”. All those present who heard his gracious words wondered and they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”

He is the sustainer of life. John 1:4 says this: In Him is life and this life was the light of men. This light is our purpose, our meaning and reason for living.

Because of the sin of the first Adam, every person is born incapable of pleasing God. We are born in sin and shaped in iniquity. Communication with God was broken because of sin. From birth we are physically alive but spiritually dead. In John 3, Nicodemus, a Pharisee and ruler of Israel came to Jesus at night. He said to Jesus, “Teacher, we know you are a teacher sent from God, because no one can do the miracles you do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, unless one is born again, he cannot be in God’s kingdom. Nicodemus said, “But if a person is already old, how can he be born again? Can he enter again into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus explained to him that there are two births, a natural birth with water and a spiritual birth from the spirit of God. Except a person be born a natural birth and a spiritual birth, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Nicodemus asked how these things can be.

Jesus went on to explain that just as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness so the people could be healed of the plague, so the son of man would be lifted up to bring spiritual healing to the nations. “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” See John 3:16.

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.” Romans 6:23.

All types of people were standing around the cross of Jesus. The soldiers that mocked him, spit on him, drove the nails into the hands and feet of our Lord Jesus Christ were there; women who loved him including his mother who believed that He is the Son of God were sorrowing; there were also people who were curious to see if He would come down off the cross or perform some heroic miracle freeing himself from torture; some threw his words back in face saying “He saved others, but he can’t save himself.” The thieves on the crosses beside him were criminals. One asked in faith to be remembered when Jesus set up his kingdom. To him Jesus said, “This day you will be with me in paradise.” The other one railed on him demanding that if He was God then free himself and them also from the crosses they were nailed to and deliver them from their tormentors. Jesus didn’t answer him. His disciple, John, stood by Jesus’ mother and to him Jesus gave the responsibility to care for Mary. Some cast lots for his garment. People like them inhabit

our world today. There are still those who mock and jeer at the gospel and they try to influence others to do the same. There are those who adore our Savior and give their lives to His service; there are those who throw it in his face that if He is God then deliver them from their miseries and woes and they blame Him for their predicaments. There are some that connect with Him in order to prosper and use Him as a means to be wealthy. Oh, yes, the people who stood around the cross while our Savior was bleeding and dying were there for various reasons and had their own explanations for being there at His death. However, when Jesus returns, every eye will behold Him and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Look at Revelation 1:7. "Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds, and everyone will see Him, even those who pierced Him. And all the people of the earth will cry loudly because of Him. Yes, this will happen! Amen!"

The Lord God says," I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the One who is and was and is coming. I am the Almighty."

I encourage everyone to take time to investigate the claims of Jesus Christ and make a personal choice where you stand on the subject. Our culture, our families and friends, our government, educational experts may try to persuade us in one school of thought or another. However, when Jesus asked his disciples "Who do men say that I am?" They answered him with these words: "Some say you are John the Baptist. Others say you are Elijah, and others say you are one of the prophets." Then Jesus asked, "But who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." Jesus warned his followers not to tell anyone who he was.

It is important that you come to a personal decision about Jesus. He either is Lord of your life or you are on Satan's side and are an enemy of Jesus. There are people who try to convince others that all religions lead to the same place, but that is a lie. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6. He said, without holiness, no man shall see God. Hebrews 12:14.

No one can be accepted into the kingdom of God by depending on their own good works. Our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God; we must have the blood of Jesus applied to our hearts. Isaiah 64:6. If you read the story of Moses leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt, the last plague was the death of the first born in every household that didn't have the blood of the lamb applied to their doorpost. That was a symbol that death is the sentence for every person that doesn't have the blood of Jesus applied to their hearts. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior I urge you not to delay, don't procrastinate, and don't ignore the call of God. Your eternal destiny depends on your faith and obedience to his calling. Jesus Christ is returning one of these days and He is coming for a church that has prepared herself for his return.