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SERMON OUTLINE FOR PASTORS

WHO IS JESUS?

Seven Things the Bible Says You Need to Know About Jesus

> If we get Jesus wrong, we get everything wrong. The Jesus we build our lives on has to be the Jesus the Bible defines, not a Jesus of our own imagination.

MAIN TEXT
Romans 10:9

FIRST PREACHED
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SERIES
We're Building Everything on Jesus, Week 1 of 4

BY
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AT A GLANCE

THE MESSAGE

1. Jesus is fully God, God in the flesh before, during, and after his time on earth, who voluntarily restrained the privileges of divinity while here.
2. Jesus is fully human, not half God and half man, so his death on the cross was a real payment and not a symbolic gesture.
3. Jesus lived a sinless life, and if he is not sinless we are not saved.
4. Jesus died on a cross as the payment required for our sin to be completely forgiven.
5. Jesus rose from the dead three days later, and the resurrection delivers to us what the cross purchased for us.
6. Jesus will come again, which is the church's blessed hope.
7. Jesus will judge all people at the great white throne, and every person will be judged according to what they have done.



WATCH IT PREACHED

youtu.be/Pb4b6IrtIS4



READ THE ARTICLE

jasonmayfield.com/messages/who-is-jesus

PREACHING NOTES

Before You Preach

This message opens a four-week series on building everything on Jesus, the first of the church's core values. It reads a lot of Scripture. Tell the congregation that up front, and lean toward proclaiming rather than explaining: seven short truths, each anchored in a text, moving quickly.

Two things to prepare. First, the message uses a prop: a small, smiling Jesus figurine, about an inch tall, to picture "little j" jesus. Any small trinket version of Jesus will work. Second, the survey numbers in point 3 and the local population figure in the conclusion should be checked and updated for your setting before you use them.

Introduction

The Bible is very clear that Jesus is the foundation. Paul calls the church a household built on the apostles and prophets, "Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:20). And 1 Corinthians 3 says that whatever you build, whatever you plant, Jesus is the foundation. Build anything on top of a foundation other than Christ, and it will not hold.

Some people wonder why the promise they read in the Bible, or the miracle they received in a service, or the goosebumps they felt in worship is not sticking. There is a good chance it is because it is not built on Jesus Christ. That is often no fault of their own: we do our church routine and never come back to the foundational teaching.

> **ROMANS 10:9** ESV
>
> [9] because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Have the congregation say it: Jesus is Lord. That is the foundation for this message.

THE QUESTION OF THE AGES

The title may sound strange for a church: Who is Jesus? You would assume everyone in the room knows. But in the church at large, we have taken for granted the person, deity and work of Jesus Christ to the point that it is almost completely ignored, and Jesus is entirely misunderstood.

If we get Jesus wrong, we get everything wrong.

A. W. Tozer wrote in *The Knowledge of the Holy*:

> What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like.

Tozer saw the importance of the question. Take it one step further: it is of equal importance that what comes to mind is shaped by the Bible alone.

- If you say, "I believe in God," is that the God of the Bible?
- If you say, "I believe in Jesus," is that the Jesus of the Bible?

If what comes to mind isn't defined by the Bible, you might get the right name, but the wrong person.

RIGHT NAME, WRONG PERSON

Illustration: the bag that went to Israel. Years ago Pastor Jason flew from Birmingham to New York City to drive a Mini Cooper back home. (The first place he ever drove a stick shift was Manhattan.) He checked a bag full of CDs and a change of clothes. At baggage claim his bag never came. The agent looked up his name and handed him a bag with a tag that said "Jason Mayfield." It was not his bag. His bag was on its way to Israel, and he was holding another Jason Mayfield's bag. They had the right name and the wrong person.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 8:5-6** ESV
>
> [5] For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"—[6] yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

There is a way to picture this:

- **Big G God:** the one true God of the Bible. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4).
- **Little g gods:** the false gods, what the Bible calls the gods of the nations.
- **Big J Jesus:** the Jesus of the Bible.
- **Little j jesus:** the jesus of our imagination. The right name, but the wrong person. Who we think Jesus is, not who the Bible says He is.

Hold up the figurine. He is smiling, his hands are up, and he is called Jesus. He is Jesus, but he's not Jesus. There is no Bible verse that says Jesus is one inch tall.

> **PSALM 115:4-8** ESV
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> [4] Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. [5] They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. [6] They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. [7] They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. [8] Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

Verse 8 is the one that should concern us most: those who make idols become like them.

Big J Jesus can save. He can heal. He can deliver. He can baptize you in the Holy Spirit. He can pull your life up out of the pit. But little j jesus can't do anything for you. He is powerless to make any change in your life.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 3:10-11** ESV
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> [10] According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. [11] For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

If the God or the Jesus of our mind turns out to be the right name and the wrong person, we risk an ineffectual supernatural supply. There is no answer to prayer and no breakthrough at the end of the wrong Jesus.

So today, seven truths that define who Jesus is.

1. Jesus Is Fully God

> **COLOSSIANS 1:15-19** ESV
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> [15] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. [16] For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. [17] And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [18] And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. [19] For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

Paul says the same thing again in the next chapter: "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

Jesus is God in the flesh. He was God before His time on earth, He was God in the flesh during His time on earth, and He is God in the flesh right now and forevermore.

Everything Jesus did on earth, He did as fully God. Yet He voluntarily restrained the privileges of His divinity while He was here. He "emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). This is called the **self-limitation of Christ.**

THE TRINITY

Here we tiptoe into the Trinity: **God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.**

This is an essential doctrine, and yet it is beyond our full comprehension. One theologian put it this way: preachers need to stop trying to explain the Trinity and start accepting it. That may be a little bold, but there is truth in it. We have to get comfortable with some mystery.

Why raise it here? Because there is a rise, especially among Pentecostals, of a teaching called Oneness, or modalism, which says the Father, Son and Spirit are not three persons but one person appearing in three modes. Pastor Jason's position: he does not necessarily believe modalism keeps a person out of the family of God, but he believes it is a great error that confuses how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit work in our lives. And the Holy Spirit is not an "it." He is the third person of the Trinity, He is God, and He shall be honored.

A full message on the Trinity comes at the end of this series.

2. Jesus Is Fully Human

In the same way that Jesus was and is fully God, He was and is fully man. The theological term for this is the **hypostatic union.** He is not half God and half man. He is fully God and fully man.

Read the Gospels and it is obvious that Jesus was a real human. He ate, He drank, He worked, He slept. He was a real man who did real things. When He went to the cross, it was a real price He paid and a real death He experienced.

But as early as the writing of the New Testament, people were denying that Jesus had a real body. They taught that Jesus went to the cross as a spirit, a kind of projection from heaven, so the price He paid was not real. This error came to be called Docetism. John dealt with these teachers directly:

> **1 JOHN 4:2 ESV**
>
> [2] By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

What Jesus did on the cross was a real payment for our sin, not a symbolic gesture.

Paul writes, "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Because He is fully God and fully man, Jesus perfectly represents us to the Father, as the payment for humanity's sin:

> **ROMANS 8:3-4 ESV**
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> [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

And He perfectly represents the Father to us:

> **HEBREWS 1:3 ESV**
>
> [3] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

If you want to know what God is like, look to Jesus. Look to the finished work of the One who came, paid the price and saved you.

> **1 JOHN 4:10 ESV**
>
> [10] In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

3. Jesus Lived a Sinless Life

> **HEBREWS 4:15 ESV**
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> [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

You would think everyone in church knows this. You would think Jesus being perfect would be at the forefront of what people think about Christianity, whether they are saved or not. It is not.

In the American Bible Society's *State of the Bible: USA 2025* survey of American adults (not church members, all Americans), 38% believed Jesus was sinless, 18% were unsure, and 44% believed He was a sinner. This was not a question of faith, but of what people think is true about Jesus.

It is crucial to proclaim this: **if He is not sinless, you are not saved.** Jesus is God, and "God is not man, that he should lie" (Numbers 23:19). He is utterly holy, utterly pure, utterly perfect, the spotless Lamb, "like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:19).

America, you need to know that Jesus is perfect. Your church needs to know that Jesus is perfect.

And He was still tempted as we are. That means we have a high priest who sympathizes with us. Jesus does not sit in an ivory tower. He came down into the middle of His creation.

4. Jesus Died on a Roman Cross

> **PHILIPPIANS 2:8** ESV
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> [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

> **1 PETER 2:24** ESV
>
> [24] He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

His death on the cross was the payment required for our sin to be completely forgiven.

5. Jesus Rose from the Dead Three Days Later

> **ROMANS 6:5-6** ESV
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> [5] For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. [6] We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

His resurrection makes us "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

The cross gets it for you. The resurrection gets it to you. The cross paid for it: what Jesus did on the cross secured the payment, and the bill is paid in full. The resurrection delivers it. Because Jesus lives, you get to be free. Because Jesus lives, you get to experience deliverance. Because Jesus lives, you get to be healed. Because Jesus lives, you get to go to heaven.

BONUS: WHERE CHRISTIANITY GETS ITS AUTHORITY

Pastor Jason was recently asked what gives Christianity its authority. The person offered two options: the Pope, as the Catholic Church believes, or the Bible, as Protestants believe. His answer: neither. **The resurrection gives the church its authority.** What makes Christianity true, and the only way to God, is that we serve a risen, living Savior right now.

6. Jesus Will Come Again

Christ "will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Hebrews 9:28). We are "waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

> **1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17 ESV**
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> [16] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Jesus is coming back, and He is coming back for you and me. We look forward to His soon-coming return. "But concerning that day and hour no one knows" (Matthew 24:36). So stop buying the books that claim to know when the end of the world is coming. We don't know the day, but He is coming.

7. Jesus Will Judge All People

> **REVELATION 20:11-15 ESV**
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> [11] Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. [12] And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. [13] And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. [14] Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. [15] And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation is a complex book, and many people claim more about it than the text says. But here is what we do know from this passage.

Every person will be judged according to what they have done. Every person who has lived, is living or will live will stand before what the church has called the great white throne judgment. Every lie, every time you cheated the tax man, every time you took what was not yours, every time you looked at what you shouldn't have. That is bad news for all of us.

But then another book is opened: the Book of Life. Call it Jesus' little black book. Heaven belongs to "only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

- If your name is written in the Book of Life, you are judged according to the fully sufficient payment of Jesus' finished work. You go to heaven, you reap an eternal reward, and you spend the rest of time in glory.
- If you have not put your faith in Jesus Christ, you will be judged according to your own doing. No one has done enough to pay for their own sin, and those whose names are not written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire.

Conclusion

This is why we do what we do. This is why a church makes changes, and why a pastor gets bold on Sundays and Wednesdays.

When this message was preached, there were about 320,000 people within 20 miles of the church. How many of them do not have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life? (Use the number for your own community.)

There's a heaven to gain and a hell to shun. We build everything on Jesus because all people need Jesus Christ. As Pastor Jason put it: "I just want to make it real difficult for people in South Alabama to go to hell."

Pray that when people meet us, pass the building, see the church sign, see an ad online or get an invitation card, the Holy Spirit will anoint it so that they become responsive to the gospel, and that their names will be written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Close where you began: Jesus is Lord. Who is Jesus? He is fully God, fully human, sinless, crucified, risen, coming again, and the judge of all people. Build everything on Him.



ABOUT

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Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, an author, and the creator of POWER 27. He has given more than 20 years to the local church and helps pastors and ministry leaders lead BIG.

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