

Jesus Begins His Ministry

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[0:00] So Juju last week challenged us. Jesus was faced with the temptation to prove himself, to prove that I can provide for myself here.

And we asked that question of ourselves. Are we trying to prove something all the time? And then Wes asked, what are you pursuing? What are you worshipping? Jesus was taken up to the top and hey, this could be all yours. What are we pursuing? What are we actually worshipping? What is the thing that we're valuing?

And then J challenges and said, what about popularity? Are we actually chasing popularity? Because he could have just jumped off the cliff. And as per Psalm 91, the angels would have caught him and there would have been a big show. He would have been the man and everyone would be just shocked and surprised and just in awe of him.

But he refused that. He refused the temptation and then he left. And all of this was because of the Holy Spirit taking him on this journey. And I love just what the Lord's been speaking to us as a community. I was talking to Francis yesterday and I was like, and he's been going through something.

This is just exactly, this is the word for me at this time. Because when you are filled with the Spirit, you will be tested. That's the whole point. You will be tested because you are going to be refined. And then after that, you will come and you will have the power of the Holy Spirit.

[1:08] So what happens here is as he finishes in the wilderness, he goes off. If we just rewind a little bit. I didn't ask Trevor to read this. Chapter 4, Luke chapter 4, in case you're joining us for the first time. Verse 13, and when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

So he had resisted all these temptations and the devil was like, okay, I'm going to let you go, but I will be back. I will be back and he's going to come back. But then, verse 14, and Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee.

And the report about him went out through all the surrounding country. So he returns. He was led. He was filled by the Spirit. He was led into the wilderness by the Spirit. And then he comes back filled with the power of the Spirit. And he goes back to his hometown.

And the hype is building. People are hearing about what he's doing. And so from here, we move in. He goes back to his hometown. And just when you think it's going to take off, the next chapter, the next part is titled Jesus Rejected and Nazareth.

And so we see here, it's after the testing, he comes back with the power. And so whatever tests you're going through, whatever trials you're going through, the temptations that you've faced, they will keep coming because it says until an opportune time.

[2:14] So it's just not a one and done. You may beat your temptation today, but it will come back again tomorrow. But continue and you will grow in strength and continue and you will continue to show and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

And he came to Nazareth. So verse 16, and we're just going to go through. And actually, I'll tell you this, as I was going through this, when I'm going through this, I'm looking at what are some three clever points that maybe we can bring out of this, like a Tim Keller.

It's like, you know, he talks about the problem and he talks about the solution, like those things. I was like, you know what? This has just been blowing my mind time and time again, just verse by verse. So I'm going to just go through it and we're going to keep it super simple. And I truly believe the Lord has a word for all of us.

And he came to Nazareth, his hometown, where he had been brought up. So he goes home. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day and he stood up to read. So this

is a famous passage because Jesus announces his arrival.

He says, I am here and I'm about to kickstart what I'm going to do. But I love it. Just even as was his, he goes home and as was his custom, he goes to church on Sunday. Which means he'd grown up doing it.

[3:15] Then it made me think, what would the son of God felt about turning up at a synagogue week in, week out? Do you remember going to church as a teenager? What am I here for? Oh, that sermon. Now it's being translated in his bilingual service and trilingual service.

This is painful. Come Lord Jesus, please now. Can you imagine Jesus going to church? It just, I just, it just dawned on me that he would have sat through service after service as a teenager, as a young man.

A couple of weeks ago, I asked him on how old he was in 25. Imagine meeting Jesus at 25. What's up? What are you doing, Jesus? Oh, chilling, just working for dad, nothing else. And going to church.

There was a, there was a custom that he, as was his custom, this was something that he was used to doing. Maybe just a side note on that. I was having a conversation with someone this week and they were talking about just going to church and all these kind of things.

And I was like, there's something about the routine and rhythm of committing and going to church. That is just built into your muscle memory. That Joe and I grew up in a church that, let's say, was hot, was not entertaining.

[4:19] It was the opposite of entertaining. But we, we, we build muscle memory. And you, time and time again, you watch people. And sometimes I challenge families, especially in Hong Kong, whose kids have a million things.

They have tennis, they have sailing, they have all these things. I'm like, oh yeah, but we couldn't make it this Sunday. Listen, I'm like, there's some Sundays that you can't make it. But actually what you're depriving your children of is actually building that muscle memory of actually just committing to a place and going there week in, week out.

And then we wonder why when they go to college, they disappear. Because there's no muscle memory. And so you see, as was the custom, he did this. And of course, we also sometimes go to church and go, ah, that sermon wasn't that great.

Like, Jesus, the son of God, who knew everything there was to know about creation, showed up to church every week. So we can just be quiet and just humble ourselves and listen and go, God, what do you have for me at this time?

And maybe, I know we've had several different service leaders announce over the last few weeks. I feel as though I maybe should say something too. We put a sign there to say, hey, 11:15, we're going to, we're going to close the door.

[5:22] And we're going to, after the worship, if there are still a few spaces, then you can come in. Let me just share the heart behind that. Because I know that sometimes some of you may have been turned away. And I am so sorry about that.

And then, of course, that may have hurt you. And I want to assure you that is not the heart and intention of this. The heart and intention is, well, actually, can we honor God for who he truly is and show up on time like we would show up on time to a cinema to watch a movie?

And, of course, if you are part of this gathering, I invite you to come early. 10:30 is when I think the service starts. And if you're a guest here and you stumbled in early, I think I saw a few of you, you'll see that there's just this wonderful time where we as a community just get together and prepare ourselves.

And so hearing from me, it is not meant to be punitive. It's not meant to make you feel bad. So you have to go down the lift and you're not, you didn't make it to church because you were rejected. I pray that you understand the heart of this. It's what we're trying to do is we're trying to say, God, you are the most important thing in our lives.

And look, and I'm going to wake up and I'm going to make sure I'm there on time. And honestly, 11 a.m. is not really that early. And, of course, I'm not saying don't ever be late. Like we are late sometimes as well.

[6:29] I'm just asking, can it not be the default? Can it not be a strolling in with a coffee? Kind of, hey, yes, creator of heaven and earth, I'm here. What you got? Can we have come with a heart of worship that's just like, God, I'm just I'm just here for you.

And I treat this so seriously. So I hope you hear the heart in that. Of course, if you have any questions, if you have any complaints, feel free to just come and talk to me. But that's what we're trying to do. And, of course, we're trying to keep people safe here as well as it gets more and more busy.

Jesus, son of God, prince of heaven, showed up to church week in, week out, as was his custom. And this time it's his turn. So he stands up and he reads. And he stands up and he, and verse 17, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Now, he would have read this in Hebrew. But actually, he would then have to translate it into Aramaic. So someone would have had, it was a bilingual service. So someone would have had to explain what he was just saying, what he just read.

[7:37] Now, it's funny here. And I think if we've grown up, put your hand up if you've heard of this passage, if you've seen this before. If you've heard it, there's probably been songs written about it. So you know that this is Jesus announcing his arrival. And he reads this.

And I found it fascinating as I was reading it again. He said he unrolls a scroll, which is why, I mean, we don't have the scroll. I would love to have a scroll. But let's say it's just the Bible here. And again, just to reiterate, the apps for me are nothing compared to this.

And I think, and I truly believe that the people who are really growing in their hunger and thirst for the Lord is because you're starting to realize, wow, there is power in this. And something that just an app cannot contain. And so what happens here is he reads it.

He stands up and he reads it. And then he sits down and essentially drops the mic. And this is what happens. And he rolled up the scroll and he gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. They sensed the atmosphere in the room had changed. They'd heard this passage before because it was about the year of jubilee.

[8:38] It was about the Israelites, the prophet Isaiah prophesying that actually the reign of the Babylonians will be finished soon. And that there will be a year of jubilee that they will all be freed.

So they knew this. Now, it's funny. They were freed. They have been since freed from the Babylonians. But yet here they are again, finding themselves under Roman oppression. So he reads this passage.

Now, bear in mind, these are his hometown folks. These are uncles and aunties. And they've heard about the hype that's going. So they heard, oh, did you hear about Joseph's son? He's doing some crazy stuff.

And Capernaum, I'm hearing stories about miracles. Where is that guy? Oh, he's back. Everyone. Jesus is a church. Come check it out. I saw him last night.

Come check out. Come Sunday morning. Come check it out. And so they come and he reads. And everyone knows something's different. All eyes are on him. And then he gives a sermon. A one-line sermon, which I know that many of you would love to have.

[9:36] You know, this is biblical. This is one line. And he began to say to them, today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. And then he just stopped. Today, what I just read, what you've heard all these years, the freedom that you're looking for.

I am him. Is what he's saying. I am him. Stop what you're doing. Shut the front door. I'm here.

Is what he's saying. And everyone's eyes are just looking at him. And they're just marveling at him. And they whisper. They're like, oh, isn't that?

Well, we know him. How's he? How's he? How's he? How's he him? That doesn't make sense.

That's what they're saying. And then he knows this.

And then he gives them a quote where he's basically saying, hey, I know you want to see something. I know you want more because you've heard about these things. I know you want me to heal.

[10:38] And you want me to show you the power. And so then he jumps into, he expands on the sermon. And it's interesting. I'm going to just quickly skip that and go to the end. So verse 22, if you're following, and all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming out of his mouth.

So they loved this sermon. But they loved the sermon because they actually didn't understand the sermon. They thought they understood the sermon, which is why they were so happy. Because they were like, this is it. This guy is going to come and bring freedom.

It's done. Romans, you guys are going down. So they were marveling. They were happy. But then he explains himself. And if you go to the end, verse 28, and when they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.

Can you imagine a sermon that started with marvel and ended with wrath? What did he say in the middle that caused them to eventually want to throw him off a cliff?

And I think that was lost on me growing up reading this. I was like, he said something that was so offensive to them that it caused just them to completely turn on 180.

[11:42] But just a couple of things about the passage in Isaiah that he quotes there. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. It says one thing. Jesus is doing nothing without the Holy Spirit. He's not saying, hey, I'm going to come and help the poor, the captives, and the blind, and the oppressed.

No, he said, the Spirit of the Lord is on me. And I'm going to do this. Everything that we do is because of the Holy Spirit. Everything that Jesus did is because of the Spirit filling him with the power of God to be able to do these things.

So he's saying, I am anointed by the Holy Spirit to do these things. And it reminds me, actually, everything that we do. It's not even by our own gifts. It's not even by the things that are in interest. The Holy Spirit is the one that's guiding us.

Even as I'm speaking, I'm saying, Holy Spirit, would you speak? And my wife will tell you, I can stand up and I can talk for quite a long time about anything and just keep going. And you can't get in a word if I'm talking about something.

But I'm saying, God, I'm just going to stop because this has got to be, this is only meaningful. This is only effective if it's the Holy Spirit speaking through me.

[12:42] And even when we lead songs, when we lead a Bible study, when we go and have lunch, when we can do anything, it's the Holy Spirit that is the one that's going to guide. So that's number one, that he's talking about being anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Second is the Holy Spirit is here to proclaim good news. There is good news, everyone, especially for those who are in need. The people who are poor, oppressed, blind, captive. There is good news for you.

There is good news coming. And then the third thing that Holy Spirit does is not just proclaim the good news. It is then bring release. Because if you look at that passage in Isaiah and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is actually freedom. And Jesus is saying, today is the day. And I'm the one who's going to usher in this new kingdom. And it is all only the Holy Spirit.

But they're so familiar with this passage, they love it, but for all the wrong reasons. Because they're looking at this guy, yeah, yeah. Those guys are going down.

[13:40] And then Jesus expands and says, actually, it's not quite like that. See, the Jews were a very prideful group of people. They were prideful, but they've also been oppressed.

So they're saying, it's our time now. But what Jesus then says is, actually, this good news, this freedom, isn't going to be just for you guys.

Actually, it's consistent with what John the Baptist was saying earlier. When he says, bear fruits in keeping with repentance. You Jews, you say you have Abraham as your dad, but you're not doing anything.

You're not living your life properly. So he's saying, fix up because other people are going to get this good news. And Jesus is basically saying the same message here.

He's saying, actually, this good news, with all due respect, you're sat here thinking that you are in a good place. Actually, you're just spiritually prideful. And spiritual pride is a dangerous, dangerous thing.

[14:36] Spiritual pride is saying, actually, I'm good. Have you ever heard that term? I'm a good Christian. I want to be a good. There's no such thing as a good Christian. It's a Christian who recognizes that they are in deep need of a savior.

And even any good work that you do is because of the Holy Spirit working in you. It's Christ working in you that allows you to do these good things. The whole definition of a Christian is that you are bad and that you need saving. And so you've got a group of people sat there going, but we're the

Jews.

God said it will come through us that we will be the ones that are saved. And then Jesus starts to unpack it and says, hey, do you know those two famous guys that you guys talk about? Elijah and his story there.

Can I tell you? And this is verse 25. But in truth, I tell you, there were the many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah. But actually, God didn't help any of those. Elijah was sent none of them, but only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon to a woman who was a widow.

So God didn't even come to help the widows of Israel. He went to enemy ground and helped the widow there. None of you got saved. It was the one over there.

[15 : 39] And then he talks about Elijah. He said, do you remember Naaman, the military leader that was leading the fight against the Israelites? He was the one who was saved. And so at this point, they're like, oh, can you imagine just sitting in the sermon?

Oh, Joseph's son. I'm so proud of him. Our kids played together. Oh, look at him. He's finally going to. He's the king. I knew it. I knew it. There was a glow about him.

I knew it. I knew it. Jesus, keep talking. Like, tell us that this is the time for us. And then slowly he's talking. He's like, they're like, oh. You're not talking about what I thought you'd be talking about.

They had become so familiar with the story there in Isaiah that they thought they knew what he was coming here to do. They thought that they were the good people. They thought that the Romans were the blind ones, that the evil ones, that they will be destroyed.

And Jesus is saying, no, actually, you're blind. You're a Jew. You're poor. You're not under oppression from the Romans.

[16 : 43] You're oppression because of your own sin. Can you imagine that? I mean, I can't quite think of a modern-day equivalent. But imagine you sat here going, well done, guys. You guys came to church. You used your Sunday morning.

It's good because you could have been outside. You could have been doing a whole bunch of fun things. But you're here. You're giving up your time to sit in this crowded room. Well done. And you're a good person. You've not done anything wrong. You've not stabbed your colleagues in the back.

You're good. You're a good Christian because you've been studying at BSF. Because you have been going to Bible study. And your attendance is well into double digits percentage-wise. 10%. So, yeah, you come to church two weeks out of four. Well done. You're a good person. And then the preacher starts to turn on you and go, actually, you know what?

Gabs, you're not as good as you think you are. Like, you standing there with all that muscle and, like, working in that. Like, and Nick with just that head full of hair and just that waviness and looking cool.

[17 : 42] Like, you're not it. You two are sinners. Do you get it? Like, you need a savior. It's looking and going.

It's the salvation isn't coming through you because you've turned away. Darren, you've been showing up to church all these years. But it's empty.

Can you imagine? That's how the atmosphere is turning. That's literally what's happening. And so he's going, and the server was like, wait. Don't pick on me. Oh, why are you talking about that?

We're good people. Do you know how much I give to the authoring bank? Do you know how much I tithe? It's nearly 10% after tax. After my trip.

And then he's saying, hey, it's not what you're giving. It's what you're still holding back. And so it starts to turn. And people are like, oh, I'm not going to allow this. Do you know I have been a standing member of this community for 30 years?

[18 : 49] I served on the deacons board. I helped rent this premises. I helped renovate this building. How dare you speak to me? Do you know how devoted I am to God? I've been reading scripture since you've been in nappies.

And then they turn. And I wonder whether we have that kind of spiritual pride. Whether we're so familiar, like, James, come and tickle my ears.

Tell me that I'm a loved child of God. That I'm okay. That I can keep on sinning and it will still be okay. Come tell me a few jokes. I love jokes. Especially in a British accent.

It's just piercing. Especially when you're joking at juju. That's just the best. Just do that. That's fun. And then I start to turn on you. I'm saying, we're all sinners here.

And the atmosphere changes. And I wonder whether we've become so familiar with some Bible stories that we don't realize that we are the problem.

[19:52] See, the group marvels at Jesus at the beginning. And do you know there's two times that Jesus himself is amazed. Do you know when there's two times up?

Does anyone know? Can you think in scripture? There's two times where Jesus is amazed by someone or something. Does anyone know? Faith.

Where do we say that? Who? He marvels at the faith of someone. Who is that person? The centurion. That's the only time he marvels at someone in a positive way.

He's like, that Roman centurion. That person who doesn't even, who didn't even grow up in Sunday school. That person has faith. Just imagine that. And he marvels at the faith of this Roman centurion.

There's another time that he marvels. Does anyone know where? He marvels at the lack of faith in the Israelites. He looks at the Israelites. So Mark 6 talks about the centurion.

[20:49] Sorry, Luke 7. Actually, you can just note these down. So you've got the centurion where he's like, I haven't even seen this kind of faith in Israel. And then in Mark 6, he's like, in Israel, there is no faith.

And I look around as Christians and I'm going, oh, I wonder whether Jesus, how Jesus would marvel at us. Is it because of our lack of faith? Because we've made church into something completely different?

Would he recognize himself if he walked in here? That's something I always ask myself. I ask myself, someone from this book in the early days, in the early church, if they walked in to this church or into one of our small groups, would they be amazed?

Would they be like, these are my fellow brothers and sisters who believe and follow the Lord? Would they be like, what is this? Is this a social club? And they walk into church.

Or forget the early church. What about someone who is a Christian who lives in a persecuted country? Who actually hides from authorities to study the word? If they walked into our church, would they be like, ah, these are my fellow brothers and sisters.

[21:54] Would they be like, you guys have no idea. You guys have no idea what you're doing. You are sleepwalking, coming to church late with your Starbucks coffee. And you are not even paying attention to the word of God.

And I'd be like, Lord, would we be a church that actually bears your image? And actually where your spirit is actually moving. And where we're actually just hungry and thirsty for your words.

May we not be self-righteous. And so we get to the point. And so they're like, that's it. We're done. Uncle Bob has had enough. And he's like, that's it. Send him out. I am not listening to this sermon anymore.

Because he clearly does not know who we are. We are the chosen people. And so they send him out. And then they actually try and throw him off a cliff. Which I think is interesting. That's a really bad place for a preacher to be in.

So you go from everyone loving you to suddenly throwing you out. I mean, I'm praying that that doesn't end up like me. But for me. But it's funny. Because this is actually. And Jesus, this is nothing new. Because this is actually the second time in two chapters that he's been asked to be thrown off a cliff.

[23:02] Right? The first time, the devil says, hey, you throw yourself off. God will catch you. And everyone's going to see how great you are. And then they'll know that you are God. And so he's like, no, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to do it the hard way.

I'm not going to do it the easy way. And then just literally a little bit long after, it happens again. And can you imagine? Actually, at that point, they're starting to hate him. And he must have been like, oh, my goodness.

If only they knew who I really was. And when they are just about to throw him off the cliff, it would have been a perfect chance for him to show them who he truly was. Can you imagine? Maybe he will let them throw him off a cliff.

And then he would just like Aladdin with the magic carpet, just rise up. Okay. See? I told you. But he doesn't. He resists it again for the second time. And even more fascinating is passing away through their mitts, he went away.

It wasn't his time yet. And you see in other parts when people are chasing after him, they just can't grab him. Because God's in control. So he just slips away. That is just so, so interesting that once again, he resists that show of power.

[24:06] He could have, but he didn't. Why was he so angry? So why were they so angry? It's because he did the reading of Isaiah, which is famous.

Maybe some of them even had a poster of it in their home because they're like, the day of the Lord is coming. The day of Jubilee is coming where we will all be free. Interestingly, when he was reading that passage from Isaiah, he actually finished mid-sentence.

He didn't actually finish the whole quote. And those of them, those days would have known this whole passage. They would have found that incredibly weird. Because if I, let's go to Isaiah 61, because that's where he was actually reading from.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted. To proclaim liberty to the captives.

And the opening of the prison to those who are bound. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Comma. And then he stops. They would have been like, hey, hey, hey, hey.

[25:06] Joseph's son. You haven't finished reading yet. Read that last line. The last line is where it's at. But he doesn't. And the day of vengeance of our God.

They were so angry. Because they thought he would be the one that brings vengeance on the Romans. That he would be their avenger.

But he stops. He just does a mic drop and he just leaves them all hanging. That's kind of also maybe why they were amazed. Because the truth is, he knows this, but they don't know it yet. He doesn't come to fight with a sword.

He doesn't come and take the world back the hard way. He takes the world. He wins the world by dying. He doesn't come with a sword, but he comes with nails. And they don't realize that yet.

But this time when Jesus comes, that time, it wasn't to bring vengeance. It was to save. It wasn't to condemn. It was to rescue.

[26:10] And that's why they're mad. And I wonder whether for us, we have some preconceptions of what we think really we want Jesus to do here. We're so familiar with the overall Bible story, though, even though we start looking at the scriptures, we actually don't know where they're from.

But we're actually going, God is for me. It's all about me. It's all about my deliverance. It's all about my comfort. It's all about my luxury. When you look at scripture, it's not about that at all. And you look at this and you think, oh, what kind of church is this?

That's such a weird church that they were so hellbent on political victory. And then you look at the church in the world right now that is divided because of politics.

And you're like, these guys were consumed by the wrong thing. Ellie prayed this earlier. Would we keep the main thing the main thing? And I don't know why you walked into church today.

Maybe it's just because you've got friends here. Maybe this is just. But do we come with the same welcoming heart that we should have? Jesus, you do whatever you want.

[27:15] You're the king. Or do we actually come with our own agenda? Do we come with our own baggage? Do we come with our own bitterness? Jesus doesn't come with a sword.

He doesn't come to bring vengeance. He comes with nails in his hands. And he comes to defeat death once and for all. The path that we chose ourselves to head down. And he defeats death by dying on the cross himself.

And so he really is him. But in a very, very different way. The question for us is, how do we respond to him? Do we respond just like his uncles and aunties in his hometown did? Where you've threatened our comfort.

You've threatened our future. You've threatened our familiarity with scripture. You have offended us. I'll tell you this. I hope I have offended you somehow, someday today. Not with my jokes, I hope.

But with the truth of the gospel. That is, you are in deep, deep need of good news. Why? Because you are stuck in a lot of bad news.

[28:15] It's Ephesians 2. That you are dead in your sins. That you have followed the course of this world. That you have given in to your own passions and your own flesh. And you are dying in the path that you are on.

You have set your mind on the things of the flesh. And that will lead to death. But God. But God. But God, rich in mercy.

Because of the great love that he has for us, has come to save us. And Jesus is basically telling them what actually Paul talks about a few years later in Ephesians. In chapter 2 he says this. Hey, remember at one time. You Gentiles in the first call the uncircumcision.

He goes, remember you were at that time separated from Christ. Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. And strangers to the covenants of promise. Having no hope and without God in the world.

But now. But now in Christ Jesus. You who were once far off have been brought near.

I'm here to tell you. That hey, you cannot save yourself. You think you are a good person. Good on you. It still isn't enough. But just before you go, well that sucks then.

[29:18] The good news is that Jesus came to save. Whether you were far off or were you near. It really doesn't matter. Because all of us fall short of the glory of God. And we all need him. And that's why we are here. And I pray that that offends you some way.

Especially for those of you who are trying to be good people. And may we continue to try to be good people. But may we rely on the grace of God. May we surrender any spiritual pride that we have. May we surrender any familiarity we think we have with what being a Christian even is. Because I think Jesus is here to turn things upside down. Instead of the sword he's coming with the nails. In order to bring life he's going about it through death. And do we understand that? Do we appreciate that? And do we understand that that is where the freedom comes from? Jesus says come if you are spiritually poor.

Come if you can't see. Blessed are those who are pure in heart. If you single-mindedly devote yourself to me. You will see me. Come those of you who are oppressed.

[30:21] That actually you can't get out of that cage yourself. But I'm here to open that cage for you. Would you come out? Would you recognize your deep need of a savior? And would you recognize that I am that savior for you?

That's a hard message. And I pray that every day, every week that we maybe not get offended. Because at some point you're like, yeah, I know.

And I am so grateful. What a wretched man or wretched woman I am. But praise to God for giving us Jesus. What I know I shouldn't do, I'm still doing.

What I know I should do, I'm not doing. Oh, thank God that I have Jesus. Thank God that I have Jesus. May we not respond to him in wrath.

Or even worse, just familiarity and lukewarmness. But may we come to him and go, Lord, I need you. So I just want to ask a simple question of all of us as we finish here is, what's the heart that you have when it comes to responding to Jesus?

[31:26] Knowing what you know now, even just this picture of this scene of his first kind of announcement of his ministry, what thoughts would be going through your mind? Would you be offended?

Would you be apathetic? Let us not be like his hometown. Let us not have the heart of Nazareth that rejects the Savior of the world.

And I'm just going to ask her to spend a moment now just to reflect on that. And allow the Holy Spirit to work. I've done enough talking. And think back to the temptations that the guys shared with us last week.

What's the temptation that you have? To prove? To provide? What are you pursuing? Are you still craving approval and popularity?

And let's take that to the cross. Lord, we're reminded of the prophecy that Mary and Joseph got when they took you to the temple as a baby.

[32:38] That you would be the cause of the rise and fall of many. That sooner or later, all of us have to choose whether to marvel at you or be completely offended by you.

To follow you. To follow you. Or to ignore you. For those of us who maybe struggle with just reflection.

And maybe you don't even know where to start. I just want to encourage you that you're not on your own. And maybe you start with the words of the psalmist.

It says to the Lord, search my heart. Test my anxious thoughts. If there is anything offensive.

Would you lead me in the way everlasting? If there are anxious thoughts that we have, may we ask why?

[34:07] Is there an idol that is uncovered from that anxiety? When we are afraid of something or someone?

Is that because we're not afraid enough or fearful enough of you, God? Lord, we're not here to be entertained.

We're not a people that are just here to just belong and be comforted. We're here because we know we need to be saved.

Over and over again. From ourselves. From the darkness that surrounds. The Holy Spirit, you are the one that convicts us of sin and righteousness.

So would you cut us to the heart? Not as a soldier would, but as a surgeon would.

[35:50] You would pierce, using your words, the very depths of our soul. And remove the tumours that exist within. The cancerous thoughts that we have. The pride that we have.

The pride that we have. I don't know about you, but I think there's...

...still so, so much pride. Spiritual pride. In me. It stops me from truly understanding who Jesus is.

We've become so used to our situation, our routines, that we completely lose sight.

Lose reverence, lose awe, lose worship. And we're stuck between marvelling and feeling offended.

We're just somewhere in between.

[37:08] Because we start relying on our own names. I just want to spend the final few moments.

If that's you. If there is spiritual pride in you. And of course, I'd be deeply concerned if it was just me.

For your sake. But could you join me in just an act of confession? I don't know what that looks like

for you. I'm personally going to be kneeling. I think when scripture says that every knee will one time bow.

There's just something that my heart just changes when I use my body to do it. And I'm going to be kneeling. Just as a moment of confession.

I don't know whether that's the same for you. If it is, then I invite you to do the same. But if it's just opening out your hands and that's as far as you're able to go today. Or if it's still just standing in whatever posture you deem.

[38:16] I just want to give us a little bit more space to bring that spiritual pride up to the surface. To repent of it. To confess.

And when we confess, we are healed. So, why don't we do that now? And so, Lord, we wrap up this service now and humble ourselves before you.

We're sorry that we got it all wrong. That we made ourselves the center of worship. But whilst our mouths say, look at you.

Our actions, our thoughts say, look at me. We've thought more of what you could do for us.

Instead of being grateful for what you have already done for us. We've looked at others and deemed them enemies.

[39:29] People that we need to be freed from. So, Spirit of the living God, would you fill us anew.

With a passion for your name and your name alone. That we would be people that not only bear your name, but walk like you.

Talk like you. Love like you. Oh, God.

We repent of any spiritual pride in us. Any pride at all. Lord we're grateful for the mercy and grace that welcomes us at your throne at the feet of the cross thank you God we are here for you it is the one thing we ask one thing that we seek it's only by your grace by your spirit thank you thank you and it's in your precious powerful name we pray

Amen Amen Amen