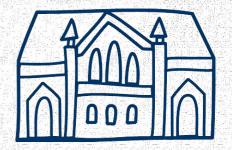
Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



Today 2nd September 2018 speaker Philip Wells, Full-time Elder. This morning - "Who is Jesus?2 #1 of 5

www.calvary-brighton.org.uk

Sermons and talks - calvary-brighton.sermon.net



Who is Jesus?

- This is the most vital and important question that we could ask today
- Why?
 - Because of his huge impact on history (the West, the Calendar)
 - Because you haven't got an answer to Life if you haven't got an answer regarding him
 - Because Christianity IS Jesus Christ (rather than church, morality, culture)
 - Because God says that your life here and hereafter is pinned exactly on the relationship you have with Jesus
- N.B. this is brought to you by a believer in Jesus Christ trying to persuade you with good reasoning

Who is Jesus - 7 brief answers

- 1. A real historical person
 - He is recorded in historical documents e.g.
 - Luke "having investigated thoroughly"
 - John "things which we have heard, we have seen with our eyes, and touched with our hands"
 - Paul "resurrection seen by " ... if not real and true "then we are of all men most to be pitied"
 - Guardian 14th April 2017

- ... These abundant historical references leave us with little reasonable doubt that Jesus lived and died. The more interesting question - which goes beyond history and objective fact - is whether Jesus died and lived. Simon Gathercole is Reader in New Testament Studies at the University of Cambridge.

 C.S. Lewis (Professor of Mediaeval and Renaissance Literature -Cambridge) - "[Jesus is one the few men of literature who comes across as a real life figure]" - "steps off the pages of Mark's gospel"

- So much more than ... Thomas the Tank Engine, Aragorn son of Arathorn, Iron Man or Captain America

- ==> Read the books [gospels] + prayer "Show me ..."

2. An obscure person

- There is nothing showy and show-offy about Jesus
 - The smallness of his family origin
 - Son of a [deceased] carpenter to a country girl, born in a small stable, located in a small town in a small distant country
 - Location of most of his ministry in Galilee ("oop north")
 - NEVER got married, lived in a palace, gained political power, headed up an army, got on the news, wrote a book
 - His death was ignominious (crucifixion ~~ condemned as a paedophile)
 - AND YET who has had / who has such a large devoted following?
 - N.B. God seemed to be so determined to set the record straight on Jesus' grandeur that – uniquely – he raised him from the dead
 - ==> extraordinary humility ...
 - ==> [Paul would say "God like humility"]

3. A superb Teacher

• If he was anything he was a Teacher!

- Crowds followed him
- Crowds listened to him ... they pushed so he got into a boat
- Crowds listened to him for hours/days on end

Variety of teaching styles

- e.g. parables
 - plus private interpretation of parables
- "sermons" e.g. sermon on the mount
- "I am" e.g. "I am the bread of life ... the good shepherd"
- Mysterious meditations ... "no one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him"
- he taught with authority, not like the Jewish Scribes
- ==> "This is my Son, listen to him"

4. A miracle worker

His contemporary opponents did not deny this

 E.g. "Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this many will believe in him .." John 11:47

• There was a large **quantity of** miracles

 "the whole town gathered at the door and Jesus healed many who had various diseases" Mark 1:34, "all over Syria ... all who were ill with various diseases ... and he healed them" Matt 4:23-25

• <u>Quality</u> - healings, exorcisms, private/public, feeding miracle (5000), crossing water

- Not self-serving, not to do with money, but restoring and preserving human life and dignity
- ==> restoring Eden ... bringing in a new world order
- "Signs" i.e. pointing to something beyond themselves
 - Opening [spiritual] eyes, ears, giving life to [spiritual] legs
 - Jesus' own authority ... depth of human need
 - ==> perhaps we identify with that?

6. A man of colossal personal authority

- It would be hard to imagine anyone making up the things that only Jesus could say (touching upon his authority)
 - An angry mob wanted to throw him over a cliff.
 "But he walked right through the crowd and went his way" Luke 4:30
 - "What is this a new teaching and with authority"
 Mark 1:22
 - [to the demon] "Be quiet! ... Come out of him!" 1:23
 "Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him" 4:41
 - "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" 5:41

Who is Jesus?

- 1. a real historical person
- 2. an obscure person
- 3. a superb Teacher
- 4. a miracle worker
- 5. a radical interpreter of "Judaism"
- 6. a man of colossal personal authority
- ==> not less than these, but more still his death!
 - We only begin to get the full answer when we can stand with Thomas at the end of John's gospel ...
- [Doubting] Thomas "My Lord and my God" -
- A promise: he can be known as a living Person today.