

Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



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

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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 - He is recorded in historical documents e.g.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 These abundant historical references leave us with little reasonable doubt that Jesus lived and died.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
- Quality - 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.