

Christ the Conqueror of Death

John 2:13-22

28/07/2024

Andrew Harrison

Camden Valley Baptist Church

www.cvbaptist.com

Let's turn in our Bibles to John Chapter 2. Thank you for having me this morning. Thank you for the warm welcome. It's really nice to be here. We've tried to organize me coming here for a while, but for one reason or another, it hasn't happened, but I'm able to be here this morning with my family, so it's wonderful to be here.

There's a number of familiar faces both from my own church and from elsewhere, so it's nice to see old friends, and of course, there are many people here I don't know as well. We've heard some good things of the work down here, and we do pray for you regularly. As Josh pointed out, he and Natalie used to visit quite regularly a number of years ago, and so we've enjoyed their fellowship. Josh has also preached for us on a number of occasions, and we've greatly benefited from his ministry, so it's good to have that rapport and to know one another and to encourage one another in the things of God.

Let's let me turn there, John Chapter 2. So I want to take some thoughts this morning on the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. When it comes to preaching on the resurrection of Christ, by and large, I would suggest that a lot of sermons focus on why Christ rose, on what He accomplished in being raised from the dead, and evidences for the resurrection, and quite rightly so, these subjects are very important, and they should occupy the sermons that ministers prepare.

But we're going to look at something different to those general topics this morning, but before we do, let's read from the Gospel of John Chapter 2 from verse 13 through to verse 22. So John 2, beginning at verse 13: "Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, 'Take these away; do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise.' Then His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.' So the Jews answered and said to Him, 'What

sign do You show to us since You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' And the Jews said, 'It has taken 46 years to build this temple, and You will raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them, and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

The first thing I want to consider as we look at this passage, and by the way, this morning we'll jump to some other passages as well, which is not my normal practice. When I preach, I generally start with a text and pretty much stick with it throughout the sermon. But this morning we will look at some other passages. But the first thing I want us to consider concerning the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the agency of His resurrection.

Now, I'm not trying to be clever this morning with theological concepts or big terms, but the idea of agency is that of cause. How was it that our Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead? Or to put it another way, by whom was He raised from the dead? And obviously, this is not an unimportant matter, otherwise, I wouldn't be preaching from it. The cause or the agency of His resurrection.

Now, the evidence for Christianity, which is a website online, says this: "Did Jesus do this miracle? In other words, the resurrection, did Jesus do this miracle? Did He raise Himself from the dead? Or did the Father raise His Son from the dead? We will let the theologians work out this question because it really does not matter who did it. No matter who did it, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is truly the greatest and most important miracle recorded in the Bible. And so this website says all that really matters is the fact that it happened. How it happened is really of no concern for us. Let those who sit in their ivory towers discussing such things, let them debate us. But for rank and file Christians, this really is of no consequence how He rose from the dead."

And so really, we are left with this question: Did Christ raise Himself from the dead by the power that is within because He is the Son of God? Or did the Father, by the Spirit, raise Him from the dead? In other words, an external power coming upon Him and working through Him. This website, this particular website, an apologetic website, says it's of no consequence. But these, I would put to you this morning, are very important questions. Who raised Christ from the dead? Did He raise Himself from the dead? Or did the Father? In other words, an external force coming upon Him and working through Him. Is that how He was raised from the dead?

Now, in looking at the text that we read earlier, you might ask yourself

the question, well, isn't the matter settled? If you look at verse 19 in John chapter 2, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." But this question exists, and people disagree with the idea that Christ Himself raised Himself from the dead based upon other passages. And they would say there are other things that we need to consider, other realities expressed elsewhere that we need to consider.

And it is the view of some theologians that Christ did in fact, and I'm talking about Protestant, evangelical, and reformed theologians who do not believe that Christ Himself actually raised His own body back to life. And I say there are other mitigating passages that we need to consider. So I want us to just touch on two of them and make some comments.

So the first one is in John chapter 5 and the healing at Bethesda. What follows on from that. Now it was read to us earlier, and I'm sure you're familiar with the account. So it's a very unusual account in the gospel narratives where there is a pool known as the pool of Bethesda where people would gather to be healed. And there is a lame man who has been there obviously for very many years. He cannot get into the water, which very mysteriously we are told was stirred up by angels. And so this lame man lived with his infirmity for a long time, and Jesus was there, and Jesus says to him, "Do you want to be made well?" And the man says, "Well, I'm unable to get to the water because everybody rushes ahead of me, and I can't get into the water." And Christ then says to this man, "Take up your mat and walk."

Now the Pharisees, being Pharisees, are immediately incensed. "You're walking with your mat on the Sabbath day!" They don't rejoice that the man's been healed. They don't contemplate the miracle that has happened before them. All they see is the violation of their Sabbath laws, which as we know, if we know the Old Testament, it really was no violation of true biblical law. It was a violation of Pharisee law, but that's irrelevant. But anyway, they're incensed. This man has broken the Sabbath, and how is it that you've come to do this?

And so the Pharisees then confront our Lord Jesus, the one who accomplished this miracle, and they then accuse Him of breaking the Sabbath. And again, you would think, how did you perform this miracle? But that doesn't enter their minds. Only the fact that the Sabbath law has been broken. And so they accuse Him of breaking Sabbath law.

And just to, and I'm obviously just paraphrasing this, but He says to them, "The works that I do are the works of My Father." That incenses them even more because He is making the Father, or He's making God, I should say, to be His Father. And they consider this to be blasphemy. So He's a Sabbath breaker, and He's a blasphemer. And what do they do? They seek to kill

Him.

Now we pick it up in verse 19 from verse 19. So that's the background. "Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself.'" And so there are theologians who read that, listen to these words, "the Son can do nothing of Himself." In other words, everything He accomplishes in the miraculous is by virtue of the fact the Father is working through Him. He is just ordinary flesh and blood. He's an ordinary man. We know that ordinary flesh and blood human beings cannot walk on water. They can't change water to wine. You cannot calm storms. You cannot raise yourself from the dead. These things could only possibly be done through you if God was to enable you to do them.

And there are theologians who say that Christ, as an ordinary flesh and blood man like you and I, could not perform miracles. It was His Father working through Him. "The Son can do nothing of Himself," Christ says to the Pharisees. So the assumption is He's powerless. Let's read on. "But what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner, for the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself does. And He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel; for as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, now note this, even so the Son gives life to whom He will."

So on the one hand, Christ says, "I can do nothing of Myself." But then He goes on to say, "even so the Son gives life to whom He will." So the Father judges no one but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

The Jews, the Pharisees in particular, the hierarchical leadership of the Jews, see Jesus Christ as contrary to God. They see Him as opposed to the laws of God. And Christ is effectively saying to them here, "God is My Father in a unique way. He is, of course, the only begotten Son. He's made of the, if we can put it this way, the same substance of the Father. God is My Father. His works are My works. My power is His power, or His power is My power. And the idea that the Son can do nothing apart from the Father is to say that the Son does not operate independently of the Father. It's not to say that the Son does not have power of His own. But the Son does not use His power independently of the Father. He always works in accordance with His Father's will."

Let me give you one other example that people will appeal to in John chapter 14. And that's the chapter at the beginning there where our Lord Jesus is announcing that He will return to His Father's house, and in His Father's house are many mansions. And He's asked the question, "Show us the way."

We don't know where to go. You are going to Your Father's house. How do we get to the Father's house?" And our Lord Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." And He says to them, "If you know Me, you know the Father. If you know Me, you know the Father." And He repeatedly says, "I and My Father are one."

Philip asks Him the question, "Show us the Father." It's already said, "If you know Me, you know the Father." And Philip asks the question or puts to Him, "Well, show us the Father." And Jesus says, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." Let's pick it up. We'll read from verse nine. So this is John chapter 14. We'll read from verse nine and verse 10. "So he who has seen Me has seen the Father. Verse 10: Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father who dwells in Me does the works."

Now again, people jump on this. Look at the language. "The Father who dwells in Me does the works." All the miracles that you have seen Me perform, the Father who dwells in Me does these things. And so people say it's not Christ in His humanity. It's not Christ who actually performs the miracles. But it's the Father working through Him. What is Jesus' point here, though, when He says this? His point is this, and He's responding to Philip's question, "If you have seen Me or sorry, show us the Father." And of course, Christ responds, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." And His point, though, is this in verse 10: "I am My Father or one. My words are His words, and My works are His works."

If we could put it this way again, "I operate as an individual. You have seen the things that I have done, but I do not operate independently of My Father. I don't do anything contrary to His will. Everything I say and do is in complete accord with His will, His words, His works." It's not to say that He isn't actually doing these things, whatever it may be, feeding the 5000, healing leprosy. He's simply saying, "I don't speak or work independently. My power is the same as the Father's power. My will is the same as the Father's will. My words and My works are the words and works of the Father."

Let me give you an illustration. I'm a cabinet maker by trade, originally. Let's imagine that I have a business, Harrison and Sons. That's my name, Andrew Harrison. We're furniture makers in this business. That's primarily what I used to do, make furniture. And my two sons are junior partners, Harrison and Sons. And let's suppose that we have our business meetings, me and my two sons, and we make decisions. One of my sons goes out, and he negotiates with wholesalers and he negotiates with retailers. And so he signs off on contracts, and he's able to do business on the part of the company. He is his own man. Let's say it's my son Cameron down the back.

Cameron is his own man. Cameron makes decisions. He has the ability to sign off on contracts and to generate work, or he can cancel contracts. He is his own man with his own power. He makes decisions for himself, but he represents the company.

He does not make decisions independent of me, the father, who we might say is the senior partner. When he speaks, he speaks on behalf of the company. He acts on behalf of the company. What he does is with a view to the company and the decisions that we have made collectively, Harrison and Sons. Yet he's his own man. Off he goes. He makes his own decisions but completely in accord with the decisions that have already been made in the boardroom. That's exactly what's being described in these two passages in John chapter 5 and John chapter 14. That's the picture.

Some of you may sit here and think about Philippians chapter 2, and theologians will very much draw upon this in this discussion. Philippians chapter 2 verses 6 and 7, Paul describing the humiliation of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who, being in the form of God, did not consider robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, or as some versions put it, He emptied Himself, taking on the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." There are theologians and preachers who very much put their finger on this passage and the idea that Christ set aside His divine attributes and didn't draw upon them during His life.

When Paul says that He does not consider robbery to be equal with God, what he means, it's an unusual expression, but what Paul is saying is this: when Jesus declared to be equal with His Father and one with His Father, He was not making false claims. He was not claiming for Himself something that was not His because He was making the claim of deity. It's not robbery for Him to do so because He wasn't attributing to Himself something that is false.

But this idea then that He's truly God come in the flesh and that He set aside His divine attributes, which is true, it doesn't mean that He never drew upon His divine attributes. What it means is that He did not use His divine attributes in order to make life easy for Himself. He didn't shelter Himself from all of the struggles and the trials and the temptations that you and I go through. He knew what it was to get tired. He knew what it was to be hungry. He knew what genuine suffering was. His suffering was real. His temptation was real. If Christ didn't experience life in a fallen world and all of the encumbrances that come upon us, then the Bible is farcical. The incarnation is farcical.

So Jesus, in a sense, because He's divine, He didn't wrap Himself up in a bubble. That's really what Philippians 2 is driving at. You saw Him walking

around the streets and in the marketplace and doing His carpentry work. He just looked like an ordinary Middle Eastern Jew. He wasn't wrapped up in cloth. If He cut Himself, He bled, and He hurt. If He tripped over down the steps, He hurt Himself. He had to learn as a boy. He had to learn to walk. He had to learn the Hebrew alphabet like all little children have to learn. But He was truly divine, truly divine. God come in the flesh. He just never used His deity in any way to make His life easy for Himself.

However, He most certainly, most certainly throughout the days of His ministry, manifested His deity through His teaching and particularly through His works. John 5:21, "even so the Son gives life to whom He will." The Son gives life to whom He will, including Himself, because as the Son of God, He is more powerful than death. Speaking as the shepherd who lays down His life in John chapter 10, He says this in verse 18, "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This command I have received from My Father." So you see how the two fit together. "I have power to lay down. No one takes My life from Me." Jesus laid down His life. He submitted Himself to death. His life was not robbed from Him as though He had no power over what was going on. He gave up His life, and He will also raise Himself up again from the dead. That's what He's saying, and He does this in complete accord with the will of His Father. Christ never acted independently of the Father or the Spirit. That's the point.

In fact, if we look at Scripture, Scripture actually attributes the resurrection to all three members of the Godhead. Galatians 1:1, "Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." First Peter 3:18, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit." There is a sense in which we can say when this question of the resurrection occurs, comes up, and I'll explain shortly the importance of this, why this is so important, when the issue of resurrection comes up and how Christ was raised from the dead, who was the agent in the resurrection, we can say that all three members of the Godhead were involved in the resurrection of Christ.

According to John chapter 2:19, chapter 5:21, chapter 10:18, Christ raised Himself from the dead. According to Galatians chapter 1 and verse 1, the Father raised Christ from the dead. According to First Peter chapter 3, the Spirit raised Christ from the dead. And this indicates to us that the resurrection has a Trinitarian focus. In fact, throughout all of Scripture, we find a Trinitarian focus. Who made the world? Who created the universe? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Who saves us from our sins? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In whose name are we baptized? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Over and over again, we find the three together. Nevertheless, Scripture does focus in on the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And while there is obviously great mystery within the triune God and how things work, and there are matters that we cannot fully understand, we have to accept and believe because it is so vitally important that Christ, by virtue of who He is, raised Himself from the dead. Yes, the Father was involved. Yes, the Spirit was involved. But Christ had to raise Himself from the dead.

Let me give you one more example of this issue of divine agency being Christ and Christ functioning as the Son of God and using His divine power. It's Matthew chapter 14. You can turn there if you like. You don't have to. Matthew chapter 14. And that well-known account of the disciples in a boat, and it's in the middle of the night, and the waves get choppy, and the wind starts to howl, and the Lord Jesus Christ walks out upon the waves towards the boat, and they see Him, the disciples see Him, they're scared. They say, "Is this a ghost?" And He says, "Fear not, it's Me." And Peter, as we know, wants to step out in faith on the water to meet Christ, and Christ calls him. Peter steps out of the boat. He becomes very conscious of the fact that he's now out on the water. The wind is howling. The water is choppy. He loses all sense of perspective that he is there with the Lord Jesus, and of course, he kind of panics. Christ offers him or gives to him that gentle rebuke, "You of little faith," takes him by the hand, and leads him back into the boat. We know that account. Let's note the response of the disciples. That's Matthew chapter 14 in verse 33.

"Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God.'" The disciples interpreted the miracle perfectly. They identify Him for who He is. He was at that moment using His divine power. He was walking across the water. Flesh and blood human beings ordinarily can't walk upon the water. And it was not merely the Father working through Him. They recognized who He was. They recognized they were in the presence of God incarnate. They worshiped Him. And they understood this in the light of the Old Testament scriptures. Job chapter 9 verse 8, "He alone, that is God alone, spreads out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea." Psalm 107 verse 29, "He calms the storm so that its waves are still."

I want you to notice what Christ doesn't do in the boat, and often we learn in Scripture from what we don't find. When they worship Him, and He was frequently worshiped, have you ever noticed, He never turns around to anybody. He didn't say in the boat, "Hey, you've got it wrong." Remember, He's a Jew. If they worship anyone other than God, that's blasphemy. He doesn't say, "No, no, no, no, you've got it wrong." It was merely the Father working through Me. I didn't do this of My own accord or My own power. It was My Father working through Me. No. They identified Him correctly.

And they worshiped Him as a consequence. They knew they were in the presence of God. They had seen a divine manifestation. Only God can pass over the sea and not sink in. Only God has the ability to control the elements. They knew who He was, and they worshiped Him, and He received their worship. He didn't say, "No, fellas, you've got it wrong here." You're misinterpreting.

Christ healed the sick, the infirm. He fed thousands. He walked on water. He turned water into wine. He did all of these things. He would raise Himself from the dead, which obviously at this time when we're reading in the gospel narratives, He had not done so, but He would raise Himself from the dead, all by virtue of the fact He is the Son of God. He is God the Son. God come in the flesh. I hope I've convinced you of this.

Now we'll come to why it's important. This point here is shorter. The importance of agency. Contrary to the view that it doesn't matter, it matters a great deal. If Christ did not raise Himself back to life, note my words, if Christ Himself, with His own power, if He did not conquer death, then you're not saved. It's as simple as that. That's why this is so very important. If Christ did not conquer death, I am not saved, and neither are you. The reason why I say it is this: there are actually many resurrections in the Bible. In fact, we believe that there are many more resurrections that occurred at this time that are not recorded in the Bible. We know of the resurrections that are recorded.

In the Old Testament, we have Elijah raising the son of the widow of Zarephath. You know of that resurrection and the ministry of Elijah in 1 Kings 17, 18, and so on. We have our Lord Jesus Christ Himself raising people from the dead. He raised Lazarus from the dead. That's a well-known resurrection there in John chapter 11. And Jairus' daughter was raised from the dead. And we have the apostles raising people from the dead. We have Dorcas raised from the dead at the hands of the apostle Peter. All of these people were raised from the dead, and you know what they can't do? They can't save you from your sins, though they were raised from the dead.

And at the end of John's gospel, the indication is there were so many more miracles that Christ did, including resurrections, that there's just too many for them to be recorded. So the idea of death and resurrection, in a sense, is nothing unusual in the gospel records or in the biblical records. But here's the thing: the widow's son, the widow of Zarephath's son, or Lazarus, or whoever it may be, death came upon them, and they had no control over it. Death swallowed up their life, and they expired. Further to this, the only reason they were raised back to life is because the Father worked in them, or we could say Christ worked in them. The Spirit of God worked in them. In other words, an external power came upon them. They themselves could

not bring their bodies back to life. They had expired. They did not conquer death. Death was conquered through them for a period because the divine power came upon them. But even then, once they were alive again, they still had no power over death because death swallowed them up once more. All of those people died a second time. They had no power over death. Their bodies returned eventually to the dust from which they came.

With Christ, it was different. If He was to save us from our sins, He had to conquer death, not just an external force coming upon Him. Because if that's all it was, if it was simply the Father working through Him by the Spirit, then we would have to say that His resurrection is no different to anybody else's resurrection. We would have to say, just as Lazarus can't save us from our sins, unless he conquered death for us, he cannot save us from our sins. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was not just a matter of Him being raised from the dead. It was a matter of He Himself accomplishing it. First Corinthians 15:55-57, Paul says, "O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, through or by our Lord Jesus Christ." God has accomplished salvation through Jesus Christ. That is in terms of who He is and what He Himself did.

Christ fulfilled the law on our behalf. We so often as Christians, we instinctively go immediately to the cross. In a certain sense, it's not wrong. Atonement was made on the cross, but do you know you are actually saved by the life of Jesus Christ? Paul is clear about that in Romans. Not only His death, to begin with, He kept the law on your behalf because you and I are lawbreakers. That's the problem. We can't keep God's law. The curse of the law is death. The wages of sin is death. Ultimately, of course, eternal death. He kept the law perfectly because He was a man, and He had to be a man to represent us. But not only that, as the Son of God, He's perfect, and He didn't break the law at all. Not even as a child, He kept the law.

Secondly, He made atonement for our guilt by shedding His own blood. The way we understand it is this: by virtue of the fact He went through suffering and death, He experienced hell on our behalf. Separation from God. You know those words that He uttered, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" We can't even scratch the surface in terms of what those words mean. We don't know what transpired within the Godhead, but something transpired by which He was forsaken by His Father, and He made atonement for our sins through His suffering and then dying. He lived a life we could not live. He died a death we could not die. Or in other words, He made a payment we could not pay. And then He conquered death on our behalf by raising Himself back to life. And in all of these things, He had to be both God and man. Man to represent us, and God in that He had to be

perfect in every way.

Jesus did these things. They were not merely accomplished through Him as though just the Father or the Spirit were working in His life. Jesus was not a puppet, and the puppet master pulled the strings. That's not what happened. Christ, in all of the miracles, His life, death, and resurrection, He was the agent of all things, and it had to be that way in order to purchase our salvation.

Let me just, before we finish, let me present three practical implications to what I've said to you this morning. In practical terms, the importance of understanding agency. Understanding Jesus' agency enables us to believe who He actually is. Christ revealed His identity through performing miracles, culminating in resurrection. People are not converted to the Christian faith simply by believing a Jewish carpenter died on the cross, who lived again, who was raised from the dead. People are converted to the Christian faith by believing who that was who died on the cross, who He actually was.

In Matthew chapter 16, Jesus says to His disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Peter responds, "Well, some say you're John the Baptist, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." Jesus then says to His disciples, "Who do you say that I, the Son of Man, am?" The apostle Peter says those really, really well-known words, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." We are converted by believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God come in the flesh. We are converted by understanding who He is and then in turn what He has accomplished for us. And in terms of identifying who He is, the miracles play a huge role. Going back to the boat, "Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God.'"

Understand something, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that He died on the cross. They believe that He rose again, but they do not believe He is the Son of God, and we don't accept them as converted people. They are religious people; they may be very disciplined people; they may be very keen to win people to their particular beliefs; they go knocking on the doors on Saturday mornings and that kind of thing. They are not the disciples of Christ because they don't worship Him; they don't regard Him as the Son of God. And so, understanding Jesus' agency in the miracles is absolutely critical. He did those things, not just God, an external force working through Him. He walked on water by His own power. He healed the sick by His own power. He raised Himself from the dead by His own power.

Secondly, understanding Jesus' agency enables us to appreciate how we are saved. Salvation is not accomplished simply because He died and rose. Lots of people die; everybody dies. Many people have risen from the dead,

as strange as that seems to us. None of them can save us. Salvation is accomplished because the God-man, the Son of God, was imputed with our guilt, and He died a penal substitutionary death on our behalf. "He who knew no sin, because He's perfect, because He's God, He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him," Paul says to the Corinthians. He was imputed with our guilt. He died a substitutionary death on our behalf, and then He conquered death for us in that He raised Himself back to life. And you know, through faith in Him, His death becomes our death. In other words, His punishment becomes our punishment. And His resurrection, through faith, becomes our resurrection. You know, we are already participants in the resurrection, do you know that? We have already been raised from death to life in spiritual resurrection. We are already part of Jesus' resurrection. The time will come in the future when we will be raised physically back to life as well, with spiritual bodies. Physical but spiritual bodies, as Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15. And it's all by virtue of the fact of who He is and what He did on our behalf.

There's a tremendous amount of mystery when it comes to all of this, what I'm describing here, and we can't know everything. You start looking at the nature of Christ, one person, as the theologians say, one person, two natures, the triune nature of God, even the work of salvation has a great deal of mystery attached. There are many things we can't understand, yet God has revealed a great deal to us, and we have a responsibility to understand as much as we can.

And one final thing then, practicalities of this issue, understanding Jesus' agency. Thirdly, understanding Jesus' agency moves us to worship. We don't just worship the Father through the Son, though we certainly do do that. You say your prayers, and you close them by saying, "In Jesus' name," right? That means you come to God through the merits of Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name. I don't stand in my own righteousness; I stand in His. In Jesus' name, I come to You and offer to You praise and confession and supplications. And we can have a view that we worship the Father through the Son, which is true, that's not a wrong view. But we also worship the Son Himself. We worship Jesus Christ. We worship all three, in fact, you know that. We worship all three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Again, when the disciples, I've made mention of this several times, when the disciples make that great declaration in the boat, "Truly You are the Son of God," what did they do? They worshiped Him.

How many times do we see in Scripture, most often, well, always actually, women. Women play such a vital role in the gospel. Women are often found in the gospel narratives where men aren't. And we find the devotion of women so tender and so kind of compelling and from the heart compared

to the men. You know, at the crucifixion, the men ran off; all the disciples ran off; you know the only ones left standing were the women. But we find the women worshiping Him, and what did they do? They pour expensive oil on Him, and they kiss His feet, and He received it. And some of the men would turn up their noses, and what's going on, and this is unseemly, and you know who this woman is that's touching you, and Jesus says, "Well, she loves much because she has been forgiven much." But the point is, we worship Him, Christ. We worship Christ.

John 5:22-23, "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." We honor the Father by honoring the Son. If we don't honor the Son, neither do we honor the Father. When all is said and done, what is the Christian life all about? The Christian life is all about love to God and love to neighbor. On these two points hang all the law of the prophets. And worship and love and devotion is not directed to God simply in the abstract but to the man Jesus Christ. The God-man Jesus Christ.

Let me conclude this morning by reminding us, we are Trinitarian. We have been saved by the triune God. We baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We worship the triune God. We believe in the one God who is three persons. And yet at the same time, as I alluded to before, the Scriptures hone in on the person and work of Christ. It's Christ who has brought God to us. God would be a terrifying prospect apart from Christ. God would always be in the abstract apart from Christ. It is not the Father who died upon the cross. It is not the Holy Spirit who was raised from the dead. It was the Son who bore our guilt. It was the Son who died in our place. It was the Son. All three participated in the resurrection, but specifically, the Son had to raise Himself from the dead in His own power because if He did not conquer death for us, we would not be saved. "Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son. Endless is the victory Thou over death has won."

Christ conquered death for us, and this is no small issue, and we need to be clear about it. And when Jesus speaks of only doing that which the Father, in a sense, has allowed, or He cannot do anything other than what the Father does, He is referring to the fact that He is in one accord with the Father, and He does not act in independence, but we should not suppose that to mean that He Himself did not do those things which are recorded, the miracles, and ultimately the resurrection. "Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son. Endless is the victory Thou over death has won." May God be pleased to bless His word to our hearts. Amen.