

Who Do You Say I AM?

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- [0 : 0 0] We recognize that Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. It's throughout our worship. But, you know, this question about who Jesus is has been bandied around the world ever since Jesus came onto the scene 2,000 years ago.
- And it's a kind of perennial question. Who is Jesus? But in particular, who is Jesus to you? Who is Jesus to you?
- And there's typically a huge array of opinions as to who Jesus is. You know, if you go down the street and ask anyone, you're going to get a huge array of answers.
- You get from the enlightened atheist who believes that Jesus never existed or he's an absolute nobody to me. They'll just say that.
- I don't know who he is. I don't care. I'm living my own life. That's the enlightened atheist. You might have the average Joe who believes that, yeah, Jesus, he doesn't know too much about him.
- [1 : 0 7] To be honest, he doesn't know anything about him. But he kind of vaguely knows there was this guy, he heard about him in Sunday school. Yeah, he's a good guy. He had, like, long hair. He wore sandals.
- Told everyone to love each other. You know, stuff like that. But you've got this huge array of people who think, who have an answer to who Jesus is.
- But without a doubt, Jesus is the most influential figure in world history. He died over 2,000 years ago, but has over 2 billion followers today.
- He's the most influential. He's the most influential, but he can also be the most enigmatic. That's why you've got this range of opinions about him. Now, Philip Schaff, who's a great church historian, said this about Jesus.
- Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander the Great, Caesar, Muhammad, and Napoleon.
- [2 : 1 1] Without science and learning, he shed more light on things human and divine than all the philosophers and scholars combined. Without writing a single line, he set more pens in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.
- Who is Jesus to you? But what did Jesus want people to get about him? How does he want us to identify him?
- According to Miriam Webster's dictionary, the word identify means the distinguishing character or personality of an individual. It's a thing that marks them out as unique.
- And in Matthew's Gospel, the question of Jesus' identity is front and center. And it gets answered today, in today's passage. The big question is, who do you say I am?
- And that's the question Jesus is asking us today. It's a question he asked his disciples, but it's the question we want to look at today. Who do you say that I am? It's a central question because it answers all the other questions about him.

- [3 : 32] In fact, Matthew's Gospel has been leading up to this point for the last few chapters. In chapter 8, verse 22, as Jesus calms the storm, the disciples were freaked out.
- And they asked themselves, what kind of man is this that the wind and the waves obey him? Later on in chapter 11, John the Baptist asked, and he's the prophet of God.
- He's the one that pointed to Jesus. And he's still wondering, who is this person? He asked this question, are you the one who was to come or should we expect another? And so there's this swirl of sort of mystery and expectation about Jesus.
- Just who is this carpenter from Nazareth that can forgive sin, walk on water, heal the sick, and confound the teachers of Israel?
- One potential answer is given by the disciples in verse 14 to Jesus' question. They replied, well, some say John the Baptist.
- [4 : 39] Others say Elijah. And still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Now these are major Old Testament prophets that they're talking about. If any one of these were walking around today, it would be very impressive.
- But none of them is enough to define who Jesus is. Friends, likewise today, Muslims consider Jesus as a prophet.
- Many others consider Jesus in the like manner. He's a man of God. He's a man with a message, love your neighbor, turn the other cheek.
- All of that. But for Jesus, that's not enough. That doesn't capture what is unique about him. It's not his unique identifier. And that's why Jesus drives down to the next point in verse 15.
- But what about you? Who do you say I am? And then Simon Peter gives the answer. You are the Christ.
- [5 : 49] The Son of the living God. You are the Christ. The Son of the living God. This is the central claim of who Jesus is.
- This is the thing that identifies him. It's his unique distinguishing mark. This is ground zero. This is the one thing that Jesus wants people to know about him.
- That he is the Christ. Now depending on your translation, as Janice read earlier, it said you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.
- And so what does Christ or what does Messiah mean? We don't use those words often today. Many people think it just means Jesus was born to Mr. and Mrs. Christ. I'm Dylan Murray. I was born to Mr. and Mrs. Murray.
- And so that sounds like his surname. Well, it's not his surname. It's his title. It's his office. But what does it mean?
- [6 : 52] And so just to remind us, I think it's up on the screen. Christ is the Greek word. That top word is in Greek. Christos. Christos, which into English is translated as, or transliterated really, just the same word in English is Christ.
- It means anointed one. Some people have what they call a christening. They christen their kids. I think they mean by that baptism, but nevertheless, a christening is when you pull off on something.
- So they've been anointed. The Hebrew word for Christ is Messiah. You can see the Hebrew word underneath it.
- You've got to read it from right to left if you want to make sense of it. But it's the Hebrew word Messiah. And that also means the anointed one.
- What they really both mean is that he's a king. You say, okay, how do you go from anointed one to king? Because anointed one does sound special. It marks Jesus out as a special person.

[8 : 04] Not everyone is anointed. Certainly not by the prophets. Because God tells the prophet who to anoint. And when they do that, they become a king. Because that's how they made kings in those days.

You would have heard that kind of explanation from us here. At St. Mark's for some time. But it's good to remind ourselves. In our days, we make a king by putting a crown on their head.

In the ancient world, in the east, where Jesus is from, a prophet would take oil and pour oil on their head. Anointing them.

Making them the Messiah or the Christ. You with me? Meaning that he's the king. Why oil? Well, it's a sign of blessing.

When you pour oil on someone, it shows you that they've got... Because olive oil was as expensive back then as it is today. You didn't just splash it around willy-nilly.

[9 : 05] And it's a sign of God's blessings on that person. That God is with them. And it's a sign that they are given the Holy Spirit who empowers them to do the work of whatever they're anointed to do.

You are the Christ. The anointed one. The Messiah. Meaning you are the king of God's kingdom. This is the chief identifying mark that Jesus wants us to get about him.

We know that's the right answer because he says in verse 17, Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

So that's Jesus' way of saying, well done, you got the answer right. But you would have picked up that there were two other titles used by Jesus in this passage. And do they mean the same thing or what do they mean?

So there's the title son of man. That's the question that Jesus first asks in verse 13. When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do people say the son of man is?

[10 : 14] So that's one title. That's the main title given by Jesus to himself. And then he talks about the son of God.

Or rather Simon gives the answer. You are the Christ in verse 16. The son of the living God. The son of God. In fact, it's all of these three titles that make Jesus unique.

Son of man. Son of God. Son of man. And Christ. These are all massive titles in the story of the Bible. In the Old Testament.

We get them all from the Old Testament. And they all have to do with God's Messiah. God's King. But what do they mean? How can we unpack them a little bit?

Well, if you've got your Bibles or your book or tablets or whatever, turn with me to Psalm 89. And I just want to show you from Psalm 89 that all of these titles revolve around Jesus being God's Messiah.

[11 : 21] They come from separate places in the Old Testament. The son of man is a title that comes from Daniel 7. And the son of God title.

You can be traced back to 2 Samuel 7. But you can look that up in your own time. Let's go to Psalm 89 where they combine to speak about God's anointed one. And I'm going to show us that we, all of these titles point to Jesus as God's anointed King who is both the son of man and the son of God.

And so Psalm 89, I'm going to start at verse 20. It's a psalm about David. It's a messianic psalm. But it's really about the son of David, the ultimate son of David, who is Jesus.

So Psalm 89 verse 20. I have found David my servant. With my sacred oil I have anointed him. That's the anointing word. That's I have messiahed him.

In the Greek, I have christened him. He is my Messiah. He is my Christ. He is my King. But David was just a shadow of God's ultimate King, Jesus.

[12 : 37] Verse 21. My hand will sustain him. Surely my arm will strengthen him. That's not hyperbole. God is saying, I'm going to protect this anointed King.

He's got the strength of the living God on his side. The enemy will not get the better of him. The wicked will not oppress him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries.

And so no enemy can withstand or overpower the Christ of God. He will have victory over every enemy that comes between him and his people.

Except if you read the story of the Old Testament. David and the other kings didn't win every battle. Especially the ones that counted. The ones against sin and idolatry.

David lost spectacularly against that battle. Although he won the battle against Goliath. It's only Jesus that has won every battle against all the enemies of God.

[13 : 48] He won the battle against the devil. Do you remember after his baptism? We saw that in Matthew, I think, chapter 4. The devil comes to him and tries to entice him back to idolatry. Just like he did with the kings of the Old Testament.

And Jesus sends him scrambling for him. Just sends him running. No thanks. I don't think I'll be doing that. Jesus won the battle against sin.

The Bible tells us that he was tempted, but he didn't sin. He was sinless. He was perfect. He was blameless. And he won the ultimate battle against death.

Because he rose again from the dead. Continuing in Psalm 89. God says of his Messiah, of his King, My faithful love will be with him.

And through my name, his horn will be exalted. My faithful love there is his covenant love. God's covenant promises are focused on the person of his King. Verse 25.

[14 : 50] I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers. He will call out to me, you are my Father, my God, the Rock, my Savior.

And this is where the Son of God language comes from. And it speaks of this close relationship between God and his anointed. That God is his Father and his anointed is his Son.

And that closeness is there to help the Son. When he's in trouble, the Father will come down and help him. Through Jesus, God becomes our Father.

Do you look to him as your King for your salvation? Is God your Father, your Rock, and your Savior?

And then verse 27. I will appoint him, I will make my Christ to be my firstborn. The most exalted of the kings of the earth.

[16 : 01] Now, David was a mighty king in the olden times, in the Old Testament. He's still revered today. David doesn't have billions of followers.

We don't follow King David. We follow his son, King Jesus. But here is both Son of Man and Son of God language blended together in the person of God's Messiah.

The Son of Man language is this one who is the most exalted of the kings of the earth. When you read Daniel 7, that passage speaks about the person, the Son of Man that rose on the clouds of heaven and came up to heaven and received all authority, power, and dominion from God.

So the Son of Man is this figure that's got worldwide power and authority. And so here in verse 27, you've got language of the Messiah being the Son of God.

I will appoint him to be my firstborn, the most important person in the whole world. And he's going to be the most exalted of the kings of the earth. Who do you say Jesus is?

[17 : 21] Do you recognize Jesus as this figure, as having the most preeminence in your life? Because that person deserves to have that glory and honor and worth given by you.

And then verse 28 and 29, I will maintain my love to him forever. This is going to be a forever king.

My covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure. God's king will have an eternal kingdom.

And his people, likewise, will endure forever. David's throne came to an end. David's life came to an end.

This can't be speaking about him. It's got to be speaking about his greatest son, Jesus Christ. Jesus' reign continues to this day because of his resurrection from the dead.

[18 : 24] Jesus is the longest reigning monarch in history. If you want to think of it like that. He's been on the throne of God. He's been in God's throne room for 2,000 years.

And nothing can overthrow his kingship. In fact, he does the overthrowing. Have you received the assurance that you have the gift of life, of eternal life?

Which you can only have if you have Jesus as your king. So friends, what Matthew 16 is telling us is that Jesus is the one true king of God's people.

He's the son of man and he's the son of God. And all these promises are given to him. But through him, those promises come to us, his people. If, like Simon, we recognize that he is the Messiah.

1 Corinthians 1.20 says, For no matter how many promises God has made, they are all yes in Christ Jesus.

[19 : 31] So here's my question to you. Who do you say Jesus is? It's knowing him as your king, as your saviour and lord that unlocks the blessings of heaven in your life.

Because whatever God gives to his king, he gives to his people. If you've not done that, and you're not quite sure what I'm talking about, because, like, we don't really believe in kings and stuff anymore.

If you want to investigate the claims further of what this means for you, then come and speak to me or Nick or anyone in our church, really. And I'll help you understand it.

If you do already acknowledge that Jesus is king, are you leaning into these promises for you? Do you trust him for these things for you?

Now, trusting in Christ for these promises is not a nice-to-have. It's absolutely vital for you as a Christian because of what Jesus says next to Peter in Matthew 16.

[20 : 41] So come back to Matthew 16. And so we've looked at who is Jesus to you. Jesus says, Who do you say I am? But Jesus has something to say to you.

Jesus says, Who are you? Who Jesus says you are. We're going to look at that in our next point. Who do you say I am?

And who does Jesus say you are? Jesus wants us, just as Jesus wants us to get his Messiahship as the central distinguishing character of his identity, there is an identity that he wants us to get as the central distinguishing feature of our lives.

And that is that we belong to the church. That may not sound important to you. You might think, Well, church. I want a better identity than that.

But what Jesus says here is of utmost importance because it's the church of Jesus that will act as his agent in the world to overcome evil and bring about the blessings and the rule of heaven to earth.

[22 : 01] So I'm just going to read Matthew 16, verse 17, 18, and 19. Jesus replied, Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah. This was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but my Father in heaven.

And I tell you that you are Peter. And on this rock, I will build my church. And the gates of Hades or hell will not overcome it.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. And whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. That sounds like some amazing privileges, doesn't it?

And so just as Peter identifies Jesus as the Christ, Jesus now renames Peter and gives him a new identity. And that identity is wrapped up in being part of the church.

Now there's a pun on the word Peter and rock. It comes out in the Greek. You are, in verse 18, I tell you that you are Peter.

[23 : 08] The Greek word is Petros. And on this rock, Petra, I will build my church. It's a pun on Peter's name. Peter means rock. But the important thing is that Jesus is going to build his church on what Peter has said.

I will build my church. This is the first of only two times that this word occurs in the Gospels. Church is very important to Jesus and it's probably more important than we think.

Now there's a lot going on in these verses. There's talk about the gates of hell and binding and loosing. And they're not easy to understand. Even that where Jesus talks about Peter being the rock and on you, on this, I will, on this rock, I will build my church has got a wide variety of interpretations.

But basically, there are two options for each of the things that Jesus says about Peter. About the gates of Hades will not overcome his church and about the keys of the kingdom and binding and loosing.

And as far as I can tell, they both are actually valid. So we'll go through that now to help us understand what it means to be part of Jesus' church. So verse 18, I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell or Hades will not overcome it.

[24 : 54] The gates of hell or Hades will not overcome it. So I've got those two words up there. The Greek word is Hades. Some of the older translations have hell and that's the kind of thing that often sticks in our memory, in our minds.

The gates of hell will not overcome the church. Now, what it doesn't mean is that the gates are used by hell as an offensive weapon. It doesn't mean that we must watch out for the gates of hell because you don't use gates as an offensive weapon in any sort, way, shape or form.

You're not attacked by gates. Gates just stand there. But that leaves us with the question, okay, if the gates of Hades or hell are not going to overcome the church, which way are the gates swinging?

Are they swinging inwards? Or are they swinging outwards? So, if the gates are swinging inwards, this could be the church actively attacking the gates.

So you put gates up as a defensive measure and Jesus says, well, this is my church. The gates of Hades will not overcome it. That's the church bashing the gates of hell down to get whatever's in there out.

[26 : 06] This is the church plundering the kingdom of hell. Now, this is not done in the afterlife. It's done in this life by the gospel proclamation of Jesus as the king.

And by doing the things that Jesus did. Exorcisms, healings, acts of mercy, acts of charity and justice. These are all part of the job description of being his people.

And as the church does that, there's God's kingdom over there and then there's this kingdom of hell or Hades. It's obviously a bad place, a place where people are shut up and don't like to be and the church is bashing the doors down, fetching them as they preach the gospel, as they're doing good works and then bringing them into the kingdom of God.

So that's the gates being bashed inwards. But the gates can also be bashed outwards. A lot of bashing going on. A lot of activity. Well, if gates are shut, there's only one way to get through them.

You've got to break them down. If the gates bash outward, that's not us doing the work, but Jesus doing the work of busting his people out of hell.

[27 : 27] Or Hades. It's about Jesus resurrecting us. The word hell here simply means the place of the dead.

It's what the Greek word Hades means. It's not the hell that we have in our popular imagination. It's the same word as the Old Testament Sheol. It's the place that everyone goes to when they die.

It's the grave. It's the place of the dead. It's death. And so, Jesus promised here as he will build his church, Jesus will build, will build his church, and death cannot stop him.

Friends, death stops every single one of us. None of us have the power to open our own graves. That's the whole point about being dead. But there is one who has that power to reach into death, kick the gates open, and haul you out alive.

This is what makes Jesus unique. He's the only king in the history of the world that has died and come back to life again and can do the same for you. Death will not have the last word for God's people.

[28 : 52] Just like death couldn't hold Jesus from coming back to life, death cannot stop the church of Jesus coming back to life. Now, either of those pictures of what happens to the gates, whether it's the church bashing the gates in and fetching people for his kingdom, or whether it's Jesus bashing the gates open and the church coming out, being raised again from the dead, both are valid and both need the church to be active in because Jesus isn't around anymore in one sense.

Let me put it that way. He's up in heaven, but he's given the job of proclaiming the gospel to his people, to the church. We've got the power to bring people back to life, not directly from the dead, although that can and does happen.

There are accounts of people being brought to the dead, especially in the New Testament. Not just Jesus rose people from the dead, Paul, Peter and others. But he calls us to be an active participant in this saving people from hell and Hades.

And that brings us to the next point that he makes in verse 19. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

And again, there's two possibilities here. The binding and loosing could be either of evil spirits. We get this from Matthew 8 where the strong man is bound by Jesus and in Matthew 12 Jesus sends out the apostles and gives them power to drive out evil spirits.

[30 : 37] Oh sorry, the strong man is in Matthew 12 and the apostles driving out evil spirits is in Matthew 10. So binding and loosing could be binding and loosing people from the power of real power of possession of evil spirits or binding and loosing them from the power of the devil just being caught up in the system of the world where they don't really care about Jesus they don't even know about him they're being blinded and they'll only have their eyes opened if they have someone from God's church tell them about Jesus.

It could also refer to binding and loosing of people's sins and that's expanded on in Matthew 18 which we'll come to in due course but there it includes the ministry of the church in dealing with unrepentant sin in its members and the same phrase of binding and loosing is used but I think here in Matthew 16 it's the binding and loosing that happens as the gospel of Christ is preached and people either accept or reject Christ as their king I think either are valid because they both fall under the umbrella of getting rid of evil in God's world they're getting rid of evil in God's world God's kingdom is a kingdom that continues to grow and overcome every evil obstacle in its way as God's people are active in it and that's what's important for us to get if we recognize

Jesus as the Messiah like Peter we also receive a new identity a new distinguishing feature and that distinguishing feature is to be part of his church but the church doesn't exist for itself it exists for Jesus to do what Jesus empowers it to do getting people out of the realm of hell loosing their bonds and freeing them so let me just ask us what does being in the church mean to you what does being in the church mean to you for so many it has connotations of dullness and boredom something you've got to do on a Sunday something you got sent to as a kid you went to Sunday school you've got to endure it rather than enjoy it but not according to Jesus not according to these verses being in the church is an active participation in Jesus' mission of getting rid of evil and setting people free that's why I read or the Old Testament reading was from 2 Samuel 22 so just go back with me quickly if you've got your

Bibles to 2 Samuel 22 and I just want to pick up something for us there Jesus wants his church to be part of his mission of getting rid of evil and setting people free so 2 Samuel sorry 2 Samuel 23 and from verse 1 up until verse 7 it talks about David as God's anointed pointing to his greatest son Jesus who is God's true anointed king son of man and the son of God but it ends with this account of David's mighty men who go on the offensive and kill anyone who gets in their way any of David's enemies I mean and these are very impressive men so from verse 9 2 Samuel 23 verse 9 these are the names of David's mighty men

Joseph Bashebet Tecamanite he was chief of the three he raised his spear against 800 men whom he killed in one encounter that's amazing yes David is God's anointed to take care of his enemies and then David gets his men his people his church to fight with him and when they do that they become very powerful I like the next story next to him verse 9 was Eliezer son of Dodai as one of the three mighty men he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered as past Diman for battle then the men of Israel retreated but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword he's going to go down fighting imagine meeting him at the end of the day hey how was your day great okay you can put the sword down

[35 : 48] I can't it's stuck there I've killed so many people and then you slowly pry the sword out of his hand what about the people that ran away the Lord brought about a great victory the troops the people who ran away because of Eliezer's actions returned to Eliezer but only to strip the dead they've got nothing to fear they can collect the dead just like David Jesus delegates his task of challenging evil in the world to his people the church to us here at St.

Mark's so the next question is how many people have you killed for Jesus no that's not the next question the New Testament tells us that our fight is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces we on a rescue mission to save life not to take it in fact we are the stormtroopers of the spiritual world the stormtroopers in the army set up are shock troops that go in and clear out the enemy's nest like Joshua and Eliezer they go in they're like the vanguard they go in to take care of the enemies there's a stronghold okay boys we're going to go in what do they do there they free the hostages the church is God's elite special forces in God's spiritual war against evil in this world you are God's elite special forces challenging and fighting back and in

God's power winning the battle against all evil in the world they talk about the president of the United States who is going to fight enemies both foreign and domestic have you heard that phrase both foreign and domestic so there's enemies outside your kingdom and there's enemies inside your kingdom and so we take up that same warfare there's enemies outside of us it's the world that is corrupted it's the devil that comes at us and tempts us to be part of the world and there's the evil inside of us it's our domestic evil it's the evil that resides we don't have the power to fix that evil we follow a king who is the son of man and the son of God has been given all authority and is risen from the dead who gives us the power to do that by the way you can't do that by yourself that's why you got to be part of the church it means a gathering of people

Christianity is not something you he doesn't just send one or two people it's ridiculous he sends an army we're brothers in arms against the fight against evil in God's world so here's my next question what is your identity in Christ if Jesus has given you a new name that identifies you something that distinguishes!

you as a Christian what name would he give you Dylan the I don't know Adrian the Carol well in the army and the air force fighters are given cool call sign names they get a different name when they sign up the famous one Maverick Tom Cruise in what's the movies Top Gun Maverick Rogue Viper Reaper these are all cool call signs that people get given and their names are linked to their job description Jesus links Peter's name to a function something Jesus can use for his purpose so when you ask what is my new identity in Christ what you're really asking is what function do you perform that would identify you as useful to

[40 : 40] God's kingdom Peter performs a hugely important function he's the rock upon which Jesus is going to build his church there's a discussion about that what that exactly means but it's got to do with what Peter said about Jesus that he's the Messiah what function do you perform for Jesus that would identify you as useful for his kingdom!

what would your God we've got a church database at St.

Mark's like many churches do for each person there's a category for active and inactive don't worry I'm going to name and shame who is in which category but just as you sit here think to yourself which one would you fall under which one would you fall under are you active in God's kingdom God wants people who are busy about his business binding evil and releasing captives primarily through the preaching of the gospel but also through good works and if you do that here is the effect that you will have on the world I'm going to end with 2 Corinthians 1 it'll be up on the screen this is that passage about all the promises are yes in

Christ Paul writes this for the Son of God Jesus Christ who was preached! among you by us by me and Silas and Timothy was not yes and no but in him it has always been yes for no matter how many promises God has made they are yes in Christ now what's important about that well here you've got Paul and his little band of active church members of freedom fighters Silas and Timothy Timothy is a young man and what have they done they've taken the gospel to a it's in Greece what's special about that it's a place so deeply stuck in idolatry and sexual immorality it's so bound by sin it's a place captured by the devil and in hell for want of a better word and here comes three little men nobody no ones they say hey you know there's this guy called

Jesus he died but God raised him from the dead and what that means is no ordinary human anymore he's the king of God's kingdom the king of the world he's the son of man and the son of God and look what the preaching of the gospel does still in 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians 1 it says now that they've preached the gospel this is what happens now it is God who makes both us and you so Paul Silas and Timothy both us and you the church stand firm in Christ but here together he anointed us together you are anointed in Christ he set his seal of ownership on us on you if you part of his church and put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come so friends the best thing you can do with your time on earth is to acknowledge

[44 : 27] Jesus as king and then get busy being an active member of his church let me pray for us Lord Jesus we've seen that the whole point and purpose of you coming to earth is to recognize you as the Christ the Messiah God's anointed king Lord as his king you've come to save the world from damnation from hell from being bondage to slavery and sin and death and Lord you've saved us we are so we're just so thankful for that but on top of that Lord you've given us this new identity a people to belong to and a purpose a job we're part of your mission to save the world will you Lord in your mercy and in your might give us grace and power to keep on trusting you and to keep on working for your kingdom Amen Amen Thank you.