

SERMON SERIES: Surprise of Faith—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield—10/22/2000

Title: “Is Jesus Really God?”

Text: John 20: 30-31 & 1 John 2: 22-25

Introduction: **Illus.: JESUS AS SAVIOR**

Theme: If Jesus is who He claimed to be—true God, it confronts you and me with the challenge of what we will do with him in our lives.

What Jesus does validates who he claimed to be

- Jesus attributed and applied to himself many titles which, **ONLY**, belong to God
 - **ILLUS.: STATISTICS AND STUFF**
 - *Messiah—God’s selected one (Luke—Jesus in home town of Nazareth and reading from Isaiah)*
 - *Lord God—(John—when Thomas witnesses the living and resurrected Jesus)*
 - *I Am—(John—Jesus uses name God gave himself to Moses at the burning bush—Jews ready to stone him)*
 - *One with the Father—(John—Jesus not just claim to be God’s Son but to be God—of one substance with Father)*
- Jesus’ assertions could lead to three, different, legitimate conclusions—either he is. . .
 - *A lunatic—totally delusional and a danger to himself and others*
 - *A liar—a fraud who has pulled the greatest “bait and switch deception that the world has ever known*
 - *or He is Lord!—leaving no room for argument by those who would opt to ignore or reject His claim on their life (He rejects me, rejects the One who has sent me.” Luke 10: 16)*
 - **ILLUS.: THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS**
- Jesus performed many verifiable miracles to substantiate his claim to be the Son of God and Savior of the world
 - **PRINT AND READ JOHN 20: 30-31**
 - His miracles confirm his authority/claim (*All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Mat28:18*
 1. *His authority over nature*
“Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?” Luke 8: 25
 2. *His authority to heal physical and spiritual ills*
“But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic—“Rise, take up your bed, and go home.” Matthew 9:6
 3. *His authority over the demonic*
“What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.” Luke 4: 36
 4. *His authority over death*
“He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise!” and the dead man sat up and began to speak.” Luke 7:14,15
 - Jesus said, *“Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” John 10: 37-38*

What he claims to be—the Son of God and Savior—requires us to respond

- **PRINT AND READ 1 JOHN 2: 22-25**
- It requires us to **CONFESS** the name of Jesus in our lives
 - **ILLUS.: IN OUR HEARTS OR UNDER OUR BEDS**
 - *“If anyone confesses me publicly here on earth, I will openly acknowledge that person before my Father in heaven. But if anyone denies me here on earth, I will deny that person before my Father in heaven.” Mat10:32,33*
 - Because there is eternal life **ONLY** in his name (**John 20: 31**)
 - Denying/disowning is a mark of Satan’s/Antichrist’s control and deception in our lives (**1 John 2: 22-23**)
 - Openly speaking about Jesus is the only way someone else who doesn’t get it will
 1. *“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Romans 10: 9*
- It invites us to **ABIDE** with Jesus everywhere we go
 - **ILLUS.: AMERICAN EXPRESS CARD—DON’T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT!**
 - *“Make sure that the message you heard from the beginning lives in you. If that message lives in you. You will also live in the Son and in the Father.” 1 John 2: 24*
- It encourages us to **POSSESS** the eternal life which is ours through Jesus
 - *“And this is the promises which He Himself made to us: eternal life.” 1 John 2: 25*
 - **ILLUS.: “ALWAYS REMEMBER WHOSE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOUR HOME IS!”**

JESUS AS SAVIOR

D.M. Stearns was preaching in Philadelphia. At the close of the service a stranger came up to him and said, "I don't like the way you spoke about the cross. I think that instead of emphasizing the death of Christ, it would be far better to preach Jesus, the teacher and example." Stearns replied, "If I presented Christ in that way, would you be willing to follow Him?" "I certainly would," said the stranger without hesitation. "All right then," said the preacher, "let's take the first step. He did no sin. Can you claim that for yourself?" The man looked confused and somewhat surprised. "Why, no," he said. "I acknowledge that I do sin." Stearns replied, "Then your greatest need is to have a Savior, not an example!"

STATISTICS AND STUFF

In a 1983 Gallup poll Americans were asked "who do you think Jesus is." 70% of those interviewed said Jesus was not just another man. 42% stated Jesus was God among men. 27% felt Jesus was only human but divinely called. 9% states Jesus was divine because he embodied the best of humanity. Also, 81% of Americans consider themselves to be Christians. [Gallup Poll](#).

UNIQUENESS OF JESUS

Newsweek religion editor Kenneth L. Woodward writes:

Clearly, the cross is what separates the Christ of Christianity from every other Jesus. In Judaism there is no precedent for a Messiah who dies, much less as a criminal as Jesus did. In Islam, the story of Jesus' death is rejected as an affront to Allah himself. Hindus can accept only a Jesus who passes into peaceful *samadhi*, a yogi who escapes the degradation of death. The figure of the crucified Christ, says Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh, "is a very painful image to me. It does not contain joy or peace, and this does not do justice to Jesus." There is, in short, no room in other religions for a Christ who experiences the full burden of mortal existence—and hence there is no reason to believe in him as the divine Son whom the Father resurrects from the dead.....

That the image of a benign Jesus has universal appeal should come as no surprise. That most of the world cannot accept the Jesus of the cross should not surprise, either. Thus the idea that Jesus can serve as a bridge uniting the world's religions is inviting but may be ultimately impossible. Citation: Kenneth L. Woodward, "The Other Jesus," *Newsweek* (3-27-00), p.50

IN OUR HEARTS OR UNDER OUR BEDS?

Our friend's seven-year-old daughter told her three-year-old sister that she had found Jesus and that she had hidden him in her heart. The younger daughter later told her mother that she also had found Jesus and that she hid him under the bed.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT

Back during the 80's the American Express company has a marketing slogan that they used on all of their television ads. Showing a particular dilemma of a late-night car breakdown, an overseas purchase, or a crisis, the announcer would then say, "American Express, don't leave home without it."

WISE WORDS FOR LIFE

A father who was particularly close to his college-bound son had just finished unloading the last box in the dorm room and it was time for him to leave his son and head back for home. For both father and son it was a particularly emotional farewell since they had never been apart from each other and this was an obvious moment of cutting the ties. After giving his son a hug, he wanted to reassure him that no matter what the distance and years, he would always find a place in their home and at their table. So he looked his son in the eye and said, "*Always remember whose your are and where your home is.*" Jesus, too, always wants us to remember that we have a friend and savior and loving God and Father in him and that we possess a promised assurance of a home in heaven with him.

[John 20:30-31](#)

Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (NASV)

[1 John 2:22-25](#)

Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. ²³Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. ²⁴As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life. (NASV)