



WHERE IS JESUS?

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Why one religion? Why can't you take him off? Yes, absolutely. I think he was a great man. I don't think he's the son of God. I think that Jesus was a hippie. Oh Jesus Christ. Not the church. I don't f*****g go to church. What I want to talk about, because Jesus Christ was the son of God and he didn't, and he didn't back down for nobody. I believe in a, Yeah, I believe in a higher power. Christiansen said, Uh, I'm right. I think they're fools. Out to this Pastor Mark here at Hemp Fest has Hemp Fest in Seattle wearing my, uh, Jesus is watching you smoke that weeded t-shirt. And uh, we're just doing a bunch of interviews with some very interesting characters. See if we can get some vignettes on culture, spirituality, religion, Jesus and whatever else they have smoked enough to give us their insights on. So thanks for joining us. What I what I've learned is that the, the answer to all the problems in the world, and the only way that this world really is going to have peace, and it is gonna have peace is through Jesus Christ when they come to, uh, to kill Jesus. Jesus Pilate asked him, uh, are you a king? And Jesus is, my kingdom is not part of this world where my kingdom was of this world. My friends would've fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from the stores. 'cause Jesus Christ was the son of God and he didn't. And he didn't back down for nobody. And that's why he had a message to speak when he came to served and he spoke it and they, they killed him. But Jesus Christ, it says in the Bible, it's gonna destroy all the kingdoms of this world. His kingdom will stand forever and there will be no more wars. He will make wars deceased from the extremities of the earth. And there will be the abundance of peace like never before. So do you think he's alive today? Oh, I know he's alive. He's sitting at the right hand of God today. So is in heaven today. He's getting ready. He's waiting for Satan and his wicked ones to finally consolidate their one last government new world order, whatever they got planned, military, police state, he's waiting for them to make their move and then he's gonna bust them to pieces. That's what it says in Psalms chapter two. I said, with an iron rod, he will break them to pieces like there will be like a chaff and the wind will take 'em away and there will be no more. And Jesus Christ is gonna rule this earth with his disciples and his chosen ones. They will be the kings and priests in this world and they will bring this earth back to paradise. Beauty like God our creator meant it to be and not like it is today with Satan as king. Now Jesus Christ is the one that loves us. And this is God's earth. It's never gonna change no matter, you know, no matter George Bush sucks, whatever they think about their, uh, temporary, uh, kingdom, the devil has had his day and this is God's earth man. It's gonna return to Jesus Christ. So you, you're a Christian Guy, I'm assuming I'm Christian. Yeah. Going to church. Real Christian. Follow Jesus Christ. Not the church. I don't, don't go to church. So you don't go to church at all. How come They're corrupt, man, they're all corrupt. All churches Are corrupt. You show me one. It isn't. I'm almost, I do that you wanna come to mind. Well, again, we're taking 12 weeks. We're looking at 12 questions that'll ultimately be published as a book with Crossway. And uh, we're we're asking the question this week, where is Jesus? And you're gonna get a lot of answers to that question depending upon who you ask. If you ask a Bahai, where is Jesus? They would say, well, Jesus body perhaps is in the ground, but his soul is with the Lord. 'cause he was a holy man. He wasn't God. And so like holy men do, he went to heaven. If you ask Mormon where is Jesus? They may tell you, well he was a man who became God. Now he got his own planet and a wife who's eternally pregnant, populating their planet. Uh, that's the Mormon vision of

heaven, which most women would say that sounds like hell eternal pregnant. Uh, yes it does. Uh, I've seen it up close to personal secondhand. It's, it's a lot of morning sickness. Uh, if you ask Jehova's witness, where is Jesus today, they would say that he did not rise from death, uh, physically, but he instead just rose spiritually. And that he actually returned to rule the earth in 1914. And he's since been ruling on the earth through the Watchtower society in Pittsburgh. So Jesus is spiritually in Pittsburgh, which may explain the Super Bowl. Uh, maybe, maybe Jesus had something to do with that. If you ask a Muslim scholar, where is Jesus today? You, you will get some various answers. But as a general rule, probably the most common would be that maybe Jesus didn't die on the cross, but instead he was taken up to heaven like Enoch or Elijah in the Old Testament. And though he is not God like holy men sometimes do, he did not die and rise, but rather he was simply taken into heaven. If you ask an Orthodox Jew where is Jesus? They would say, well, he's in the ground. He died and he never did rise. And his bones are somewhere in the Middle East. And the two likely most prominent, uh, responses to the questions of where is Jesus is the Christian position that I'll share with you in a moment. And that position that says that Jesus just died. He never did rise. He's not alive and his bones are somewhere in the dirt in the Middle East. And, and some would say that that is in fact the case. And this has a long history in America. Uh, for example, Thomas Jefferson, when he was our president, he sat down in the White House with a copy of the Bible and a razor and he cut out the parts of the Bible that he decided were wrong. I guess he had a lot of self-esteem. And when you're the president, you, you have a high view of yourself. So he's cutting out whole sections of the Bible and he created something called the philosophy of Jesus Christ. And he took out all of the miracles, including the resurrection. And only about a 10th of the New Testament texts actually remained in the Bible. So he says, Jesus is dead and in the grave and he never did rise. All he left for us were some good teachings. He was a good moral holy teacher, but he certainly wasn't God and he's not eternally alive in heaven or anything of that nature. Following in that same sort of attitude was the Jesus seminar, which was convened in 1985. There were 30 scholars, I'll use that in quotes, and 200 fellows that gathered together. And they walked through the New Testament gospels about Jesus and they voted on the words and the deeds attributed to Jesus. And they decided what they thought should remain and should go. And they decided that only about 18% of what we think actually was said by Jesus was actually said by him, including nothing from the Gospel of John. It rejected all of John. 'cause Jesus keeps saying he's God throughout the gospel of John. And one of the scholars on that team said Jesus died on the cross. His body was thrown in a ditch and it was eaten by dogs. And so if you wanna know where Jesus is, you gotta find his bones somewhere in a ditch in the Middle East. Those are the varying perspectives of where Jesus Christ is today. And if you saw the Da Vinci code or read the book, you know that the, the myth there is that Jesus didn't die and rise and that Jesus isn't alive today. That instead Jesus ran off to France. 'cause apparently that's where cowards went even a long time ago. So he went to France. Oh, come on, come on. Yeah. Every country wants to go to Oregon against France, right? I mean it's like, sure, this would be a good weekend. Anyways, uh, I I'm half French, I'm half Irish, half French. My one grandpa was got the a and the other was O Driscoll. And uh, and I continually repent to the French half, but I'm proud of the Irish half anyways. Uh, Jesus, you will be told in the Da Vinci

code, ran off to France with his wife, had a few kids died and he's buried somewhere, you know, that no one knows and that his bones are just laying in the ground. Those are kind of the common perspectives. Well, what I'd like to do today then is ask the question, where is Jesus? And not just hear what everyone says about Jesus, but actually hear from Jesus what he would have to say about this. And in the scriptures he says in John 16:28, uh, that he came down from heaven and that he is doing his ministry on the earth and that he is going back to heaven. I'll read it for you. And by way of correlation in your notes, I've got 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 other places just in the Jo Gospel of John, where Jesus essentially says the same thing, I'm eternal God who lived in heaven. I came down into human history to live without sin, to die and rise. And I'm going back to heaven. Uh, he says this in John 16:28. Jesus says, I came from the Father and entered the world. Now I'm leaving the world. And going back to the Father, Jesus says, an eternal God lived in heaven. I've come down to the earth for a mission to save sinners through my death, burial and resurrection. And then when I'm done with my mission, I will return back to heaven where I came from. So Jesus repeatedly answered the question where He is today, he is in heaven, alive and well. He died. He rose, he ascended. We call this the exaltation of Jesus. And there are two truths that I need you to keep in your mind. One is that during Jesus' life on the earth, we saw him in his state of humble incarnation. And now that he has returned to heaven, we must see him in his state of glorious exultation. And Jesus humble incarnation is our example. How to live our life. How to forgive our enemies, love people, feed the hungry, care for widows and orphans. Do good deeds. Love our neighbor. Right? That is our example. But also it is imperative that when we think of Jesus, we think of Jesus as the scriptures completely reveal him. And my fear is that if we get our only picture of Jesus from the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we will only think of Jesus as a humble, marginalized, Galilean peasant, which in fact was the case during his humble incarnation on the earth. But if we don't keep reading books like Acts in the book of Revelation to see him in his state of glorious exaltation, we will miss the full breadth of who Jesus is according to scripture. And so what I will do is I'll tell you a little bit about Jesus from the Book of Revelation and somebody say, that's a spooky book. I don't like it. Uh, it's not a spooky book. Sometimes the dudes who teach it are a little spooky. I will, I will concede that point to be sure. Uh, the Book of Revelation is a book about Jesus. The opening line of the book says The Revelation of Jesus Christ. So it's not about Black Hawk helicopters and getting, you know, a barcode on your head for the anti-Christ to scan you at Safeway. That's not what it's about. Okay? Though some would teach you that the book of Revelation is a book about Jesus and it breaks into two scenes. There are earthly scenes with wars and conflict and issues on the earth. And then there are heavenly scenes where Jesus Christ is revealed, seated in glory, ruling and reigning as Lord, God and king overall. And all worship proceeds to the throne. All truth and judgment proceeds from the throne of Jesus. And therein we see Jesus. So I'm gonna read a section of Revelation 19, uh, about Jesus. And if you've been here for any length of time, you may have heard this before, but I'll read to you the description of Jesus. If we were to see him today in heaven, you wouldn't see humble, marginalized Galilee. In peasant. You would see this guy. Revelation 19:11, I saw heaven standing open. So John got a glimpse of heaven opened up and before me was a white horse. How many of you dudes grew up watching westerns? The good guy always rides the

what? The white horse. You could tell here he comes Jesus on a white horse. Westerns by the way, ripped that off. It should pay a royalty to the Bible 'cause they ripped that off. Anyways, whose writer is called faithful and true love that with justice he judges and makes war. This is not pacified hippie Jesus, right? This is ultimate fighter open a can Jesus That's that's this. Jesus love this guy. His eyes are like blazing fire. He's like that dude in the video. He does not blink and doesn't miss anything and on his head are many crowns. King of all kings. He has a name written on him that no one knows, but he himself, he is dressed in a robe dipped in blood. Oh, love that, love that. See, before I was a Christian, I was very disinterested in Jesus because I thought why give your life to a man you can beat up? That's what I thought. Because the pictures I'd all seen of Jesus, he had feathered hair, was wearing a dress listening to a lot of Elton John. And I just didn't think I was going to give my life to him. Now this guy right here, I can't take him right? He's got a robe dipped in blood. Any guy who has blood as an accessory is tough, right? And it ain't his blood. That's another point. And his name is the word of God, the armies of heaven. Were riding with him, the saints and the angels. He's got a posse. Love that. Riding on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean. I've said it before, but it bears repeating. If you go to fight a guy and he shows up in white, you are dead. He is a very tough man. Any man who shows up in fresh pressed white linen for battle is pretty sure he can take you. He doesn't even plan on getting dirty. That's a scary man run for your life. Right out of his mouth comes a sharp sword. My sons love this. They run around the house with a sword protruding from their mouth screaming. Revelation 19, true story. We're kind of an Old Testament family. Uh, out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. This is, this is, this is a tough Jesus. He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the wine press of the fury, of the wrath of God Almighty. The concept of the wine press is they would throw grapes in the press, they would stomp them under foot and the juice would flow. So it will be at the second coming of Jesus that his enemies will be trampled under foot and their blood will flow on his robe and on his thigh, he has this name written, king of kings Lord of Lords tattooed down the leg of Jesus. Right? This is tattooed up white horse riding blazing eyes, all seeing sword coming to slaughter. The nation's robe dipped in blood. Jesus love that guy. You know, some of you say, I just struggle with my prayer life. It may be that you don't have a clear picture of Jesus. This guy could actually do something. He's a good guy to pray to. Some of you may say, my my worship is very uninspired. It may be because you have a very deficient picture of Jesus. You don't think of Jesus as scripture portrays him in his present state. The result of this as well is a growing crisis in Christianity where men don't think much of Jesus. Men are not inspired by Jesus. Men don't participate in church life. And if they do, they tend not to be the most manly. So much so that a stati statistician, George Barna has said that 60% of all American Christians are female, only 40% are male. Again, we are glad that so many women love Jesus. But the question begs to be answered, why would so many men be so unimpressed and uninspired and unmotivated by Jesus? It may be because all they know of is Jesus during his humble incarnation. They don't have any accurate picture of him in his glorious exaltation. So if you single women are here and you love Jesus and you're saying, I would like to be married, I'm having a hard time meeting a good man, that's because the women predominantly are the ones walking with Jesus, not the men. And the odds are against them. They're

between 11 and 13 million more female Christians than male Christians. It's just an issue. Not only that, women tend to be far more committed to Jesus in ministry. They are a hundred percent more likely to be involved in discipleship. 56% more likely to hold a church leadership position, 54% more likely to participate in a small group, 46% more likely to disciple another person, 39% more likely to have a devotional or quiet time. 33% more likely to volunteer for church service, 29% more likely to read their Bible, 29% more likely to attend church, 29% more likely to share their faith with another person and 23% more likely to give money to their church. Statistically, most men are not impressed by Jesus. Statistically, most men are not fearful of Jesus. Statistically, most people who worship Jesus are female. And those men who reject Jesus, I think it is often in part that they have not a wrong but an only partial view of Jesus. All they see is humble, marginalized, Galilean peasant. They don't know that he's still alive, that he's king, Lord God. He's triumphant warrior victor. He's the kind of inspiring God that men should seek to be like, to pray to, to worship as the exalted, glorious, risen, ascended king of kings and Lord of lords. And so I think one of the reasons that there is such a deficiency of men in masculinity is an incomplete portrait of Jesus to help correct that. What I want to do is I wanna take you from the resurrection of Jesus, which we examined in previous weeks where Jesus rose physically bodily from death. He then appeared for 40 days proving to everyone that he was in fact alive and had conquered sin and death. And then we'll look at what acts and revelation and other scriptures say about what happened after the gospels were written about the ensuing times in which the Book of Acts and the New Testament epistles were written. So we'll start in Acts chapter one and we'll look at the ascension of Jesus after he died. Rose appeared for 40 days. Jesus ascended into heaven says this in Acts one, nine through 11, he was taken up before their very eyes and the cloud hit him from their sight. They were looking intently up in the sky as he was going, right? Everybody's hanging out with Jesus and then he just starts going up. Had to be an interesting moment, right? Where's Jesus, right? Somebody put a string on him, where's he going? You know what? What? Where's Jesus going? He's going back up to heaven just like he said he would. Then suddenly two men dressed in white. Perhaps angels stood by beside them, men of Galilee. They said, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken from you into heaven will come back in the very same way you've seen him go into heaven. They said, well, Jesus is ascended back into heaven. Now you guys go about your ministry, tell people about his resurrection and ascension. And when the appointed time comes, he will descend back down to the earth. Just as you have seen him ascend into heaven. That means that Jesus is alive today, that Jesus is in heaven today, and that Jesus continues to occupy a glorified resurrected physical body. He he, he rose in a glorified, resurrected physical body. He ascended in that body and he will return in the same way that he went in a glorified resurrected physical body. Second thing is, when he ascended, he took Christians with him. Okay? Some of you may have wondered, well, if Jesus is the one who died for sin and when he ascended into heaven, if he opened up heaven, what did? What did God do with the Christians, the people who were trusting in Jesus, the Old Testament Jews who loved him and were waiting for him. What did he do with them? If heaven wasn't open and Jesus hadn't opened heaven, what happened to them? Luke 16 records that they were taken to a place and there they were. Hell, it's not purgatory and it's not hell. Some

people say that Jesus in fact went to hell upon his death. He didn't remember what he said on the cross to the thief. Today you'll be with me. Where paradise hell is not paradise. Those are not synonyms. Detroit isn't even paradise, right? I mean it is. Jesus said, I'm going to paradise. Paradise is that place where the people who love Jesus and were waiting for his resurrection and ascension to open heaven. That's where they were waiting for Jesus, right? And so Jesus went to that place. Three days later he rose. 40 days after that he ascended into heaven. And Ephesians two, uh, four, eight rather says, when he ascended on high, he led captives in his train. So Jesus opened heaven with his ascension. And all of the Old Testament saints who had been waiting for the uh, forgiveness of sin through the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension into heaven, which opened heaven, they all were taken with him. So that today, if you die, Paul says to the Corinthians, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. So if we die today, we don't go to purgatory, we don't go to hell. We if we don't, if we know Jesus, we don't go to some middle holding place. Instead we go to heaven to be with Jesus because he is opened heaven for us at his ascension. So Jesus ascended into heaven. He took Old Testament saints with him and then he was seated at the right hand of God the Father. And this concept of the right hand in scripture is very important. It's with the right hand. You make treaties, pray over people, extend the hand of friendship, bless people, enter into covenants. And to be seated at the right hand of someone is the seat of authority and preeminence and prominence and respect. It's, it's a glorious place to be seated. Psalm 110 verse one prophesied that Jesus would be seated at the right hand of God the Father. It says it this way, the Lord that is God the Father says to my Lord, that is Jesus Christ. God the Son sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. And then Jesus says that he in fact was ascending into heaven to fulfill that prophecy in Matthew 26 64. Yes it is, as you say, Jesus replied, but I say to all of you in the future, you will see the Son of man speaking of himself with Messianic title from Daniel seven, sitting at the right hand of the mighty one and coming on the clouds of heaven. The promise was given that God the Son, would sit at the right hand as equal in authority and glory and honor and power. Uh, he would sit at the right hand of God the Father. And Jesus says, that promise is given about me. And when I finish my work and I ascend into heaven, I will be seated at the right hand of God the Father. So Jesus is alive today in a glorified resurrected body. He's in his glorious exaltation in heaven and he is seated at the right hand of God the Father. And he has seated scripture says on a throne, this is one of my favorite images in all of scripture. This concept of the throne or this image of the throne sometimes refers to earthly rulers, often refers to God. It appears 196 times in scripture. It appears roughly 135 times in the Old Testament. 61 times in the New Testament of the 61 New Testament occurrences of the throne 45 are in the book of Revelation. Therein it appears in 17 of 22 chapters, the most packed chapter on the throne, if you wanna read one, is Revelation chapter four. And what revelation shows us repeatedly is that when heaven opens up in revelation, we see the heavenly scenes. The centerpiece is the throne and seated on the throne is Jesus ruling and reigning is king, Lord God, warrior and savior. And and in that day when people sat on the floor squatted and reclined, it was kings who sat on thrones. It was priests who sat on thrones and it was triumphant, victorious, noble warriors who had returned from battle that were seated on thrones in places of honor to be thanked and praised by those that they love so well to sacrifice their own life, to

save. And Jesus is all of those. He sits on a throne as our priest who mediates between us and God as a king who rules over everyone and everything and as a triumphant warrior and victorious, uh, warrior against sin and death who has conquered Satan and has ascended into heaven and has been honored with the seat, uh, at the right hand of the Father seated on the throne in heaven. Why do I tell you this? You say, what does this matter? Because my fear is that so many of us have a deficient picture of Jesus. That when we think of Jesus, we don't think of anyone who's still alive. We don't think of anyone who is in any authority, any power. We don't think of anyone who can help us, who can answer our prayer, who can make any difference in our life, who has any rule or authority or jurisdiction over our world. And the concept of Jesus high and exalted as eternal God seated at the right hand of the Father on a throne in heaven. That's a Jesus we could pray to. That's a Jesus we can worship. That's a Jesus that when we are told that we will stand before him at the end of our life and give account for all that we have said and done and believed that that is a Jesus that we should respect rightly fear and give appropriate homage to now regarding this. Because Jesus throne is in heaven. It is over all creation. It is over human beings and creatures and beasts and and angels. It is over nations and kingdoms. It extends over all creation. That's the concept of the exaltation of Jesus, that he is supreme, that he is over all people, times, places, circumstances, religions, perspectives, ideologies, preferences and such. I'll read some examples to you about the absolute claims of Jesus as being unprecedented in the scope of his rule and reign from his throne in glory. And Matthew 11:27, he said, all things have been committed to me by my father. What is under the jurisdiction of Jesus? All things. It says in John 3:35, Jesus says the Father loves the Son and is placed everything in his hands. What is in the hands of Jesus? Everything, nations, kings, kingdoms, philosophies, religions, times, places, tragedies, all are in the hands of Jesus. This is what we mean when we say that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus is sovereign. That's what we mean that nothing is beyond the control of his hand. Ephesians 1:22, 1:28 rather says that God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be the head over everything for the church. Jesus is over everything. Jesus rules over all things. And again, this is not controversial if we simply say Jesus rules over Christians, Jesus is my personal savior. Jesus is my personal Lord. Jesus rules over my family. Jesus rules over my church. Where we get into trouble is when we say Jesus rules over all people. Jesus rules over all religions. Jesus rules over all nations. Jesus rules over all circumstances, right? This is what got the Old Testament saints in trouble. This is what got the New Testament saints martyred. You can have every God you want, any God you want. Just don't see that your God is above the other gods, that your God is the only God and that your God rules and reigns supreme overall peoples times, places, circumstances and perspectives. But that's exactly what scripture says about Jesus. These are unparalleled claims. Furthermore, it says in Acts 10:36, Jesus Christ is Lord over all, all nations, all races, all cultures, all religions, all peoples, all times, all places. Colossians one 15, he Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, right over all creation, over all plants, over all animals, over all galaxies, over all countries, over all beings, over everyone and everything. And it says in Colossians one 17 and 18, he is before all things that is eternal, before anything came into existence. And in him, all things hold together and he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead. So that in everything he

might have supremacy. This is a big Jesus in one of the great deficiencies among Christians is to have a very small, very diminished Jesus, simply the Jesus of the humble incarnation, not the Jesus of the glorious exaltation. And again, both are true. The incarnation of Jesus during his humble life on the earth. That is our example, but the exaltation of Jesus, that is the object of our worship. If you were to see Jesus today, you would see him on the throne high and exalted ruling and reigning over everyone and everything from the right hand of the Father. And you would naturally be undone because you would acknowledge your sinfulness. You would naturally worship him because that is the reason that you were made to worship that man, the Lord Jesus Christ. And furthermore, what this means practically, and this is where Christianity becomes exceedingly contentious in the mind of some, some of you say this sounds very exclusive and it is. It is also very inclusive and this is the paradox of Jesus. He is very exclusive in that no one comes to the Father, he says, but through him that there is no God but him. There is no life but him. There is no forgiveness of sin but him. Very exclusive but very inclusive in that every nation, tribe, language, tongue, color, background, orientation of people are welcome to repent of sin and trust in him that Jesus is exclusive in that he alone reigns supreme and the only God, but he's very inclusive in that He invites everyone to taste of his grace, to be forgiven of their sin and to spend forever with him. What this means practically, and this is where there is conflict, I will not lie about that in any way. This means that Jesus is supreme, the only God ruling and reigning over homosexuals, heterosexuals, bisexuals, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, those who are Republican and Democrat, those who are wise and simple, those who live in the suburbs, those who live in the cities, those who live in the rural areas, those who lived in the past, those who live in the present, those who live in the future, that Jesus is the only God who ruling and reigning in authority over Buddhists, over Jews, over Muslims, over BAHAs, over those who are into Jehovah's Witness Mormonism and Christianity, that Jesus Christ rules over the healthy and the sick all generations. He rules over the living and the dead. He rules over all the nations, all the kings, all the kingdoms, all of the issues, all of the ideologies, all of the philosophies, and there is nothing above Jesus. He rules and reigns supreme over all after his ascension and his glorious exaltation. That is the Jesus we are talking about when we speak of the Jesus of the Bible who is alive and well today seated on his throne in heaven at the right hand of the Father. Reload. This is the issue. People will not have any trouble if we say Jesus is the God of Christians. Jesus is the God of Morris Hill. Jesus is the God of my family. Jesus is the God of my life. If we say no, there is no God but Jesus. That is where the conflict comes. And again, the early church was told, can't you worship Jesus and other gods and also the emperor and Christians said, no, the emperor sits on a throne, but we have someone who sits on a bigger throne and his kingdom is bigger than that kingdom ruled by the emperor and we have allegiance to Jesus as our king and his kingdom above this king and his kingdom and that is the way it must be. And Christians were put to death on this very issue, the supremacy, the exaltation, the superiority, the authority, the rule, the sovereign lordship of this living forever living Jesus. That being said, this has all kind of practical implications for you and me that are wonderful and glorious and good. One of them is that not only is Jesus alive and ruling and reigning and that kind of authority and power that he loves us and that he intercedes for us and that Jesus Christ, by continuing in his glorified, resurrected, exalted body remains

fully God, fully man. Just like the Caledonian creed that we studied some weeks ago, one Timothy two, five says that there is one, there is one God, first thing, there is one God, and there is one mediator between human beings and God. That is who one Timothy two, five says, the man Christ Jesus. That means today Jesus remains alive as our mediator. He still exists in his glorified resurrected physical body. He is God who became a man to identify with men and women and that he has ascended and he is still interceding for us. That means that our whole life now for those of us who are Christian, is Trinitarian in nature that the spirit of God, God, the Holy Spirit lives in me and I pray by the power of the Spirit through the mediator of Jesus to God the Father. The reason that God the Father hears my prayers is that they are, they are connected to God, the Father by Jesus Christ, God the Son. My worship is by the enabling of God, the Holy Spirit in me through Jesus Christ, my mediator to God the Father, and that is how our whole life is lived. Trinitarian in nature, by the power of the Spirit through the mediator of Jesus to the glory of the Father are all things. And Jesus is our living mediator. Because he's alive, we could talk to him. He hears because he rules and reigns. He has the ability to answer prayer, to be involved in our lives, to have implications on the earth, and we pray to Jesus. We're not just praying to someone that we hope is alive to hear us, but we're praying to someone who we know is alive and alone can mediate between us and the Father. See that our prayers are heard and answered. Second benefit that we have is that I know practically we're seated here at Morris Hill Church, but positionally, we are seated with Jesus Christ in the heavens that not only is Jesus seated with the right hand of the Father, that in love for us and in grace to us, nothing that we deserve Jesus has seen fit to positionally seat us with him so that we share in his authority, not so that we'd be prone to triumphal arrogance, but rather that we would have authority over Satan and demons to live free lives. And he says it this way in Ephesians two, six, God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. If Christ is in you and you are in Christ, you are positionally seated with Jesus Christ in heaven. And Paul tells the Corinthians that you will judge the angels, that includes the demons and that by the authority of Jesus, the designated authority of Jesus, you have the authority to tread on serpents or demons. You do not need to be harassed by evil spirits, by tormenting dreams, by demonic accusations and strongholds in your life. We have the authority of Jesus. It's not that we innately possess that kind of authority, but by virtue of the fact that Jesus has seated us with him, everything that is under the authority of Jesus is likewise under the authority of the Christian who by God's grace is positionally seated next to Jesus in glory. And then additionally, not only do we have these benefits during this life because of the ascension of Jesus back into heaven, but that he has gone there to prepare a place for us so that upon his coming or our death, we shall be forever with him in heaven. He said this in John 14, two and three in my father's house, great metaphor are many rooms. If it were not so, I would've told you I'm going there to prepare a place for you and if I go there to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am. Jesus lived the life we could not live. He died the death we should have died. He rose for our victory over Satan's sin and death. He appeared for 40 days. He ascended into heaven in a glorified resurrected body. He has prepared a place for his people and all who die with faith in him, follow in his wake and find themselves in his kingdom. Where there is no sickness, there is no sin, there

is no death. There is no evil, there is no injustice. There is no tyranny. The kingdom that God intended before sin corrupted everything that he made very good. The only way that we have any possibility of eternal life that is good is through Jesus ascending and opening heaven and enabling us by his loving affection to follow in his wake. Those are the benefits and some of the practical implications of the ascension of the living. Glorified resurrected king of kings, Lord of lords, Jesus Christ in heaven. On the throne at the right hand of the Father over every one and everything. It is that Jesus, what we'll stand before at the end and be judged by and give an account to at prior to his ascension, Jesus gave us the church some final commands that he intended for us to obey. He says them at the end of Matthew and essentially reiterates them at the beginning of the Book of Acts. Our read from Matthew 28 18 through 20, it's known as the Great Commission, right? The ascended Jesus. Uh, just before his ascension, the the words that he gave to us, his people was that he had some work for us to do, that he was returning, but that his ministry had to continue and that you and I, by the power of the Holy Spirit would be blessed to partake in that work. He said it this way. Again, what would you say on your deathbed? What would your final words be if you knew you were having some of your final conversations with those you love most dearly? What would you say? Here is what Jesus said, and this is what weighed most strongly on his heart. Then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Okay, let's not read that too quickly. Let's, let's meditate on that briefly, all authority. That is a strong claim. The essence of the postmodern mood, and I believe it is little more than that, is that there is no authority. There is no one above human history. There is no objective point from which history can be seen or judged and that no one has authority to say that something is right and something is wrong, and something is true and something is false. The result is a foggy world of despair that we're trapped in. Jesus says, all authority has been given to me. This is an unparalleled claim. All authority. He says in heaven and on the earth, right? This is the complete supremacy and utter rulership of Jesus, that he rules over heaven. He rules over earth, he rules over everything as exalted, ascended, Lord, God, and Savior. All authority has been given to me. And then he continues. Therefore, as you go, right, as you go about your life, your job, as you go to school, as you move around, as you spread throughout the nations of the earth, make disciples of all nations. You say, but this nation already has their religion. Jesus says, that doesn't matter. All authority has been given to me. I'm the only God that religion that does not worship me, those people need to hear about me. But these people have their own degrees and their own opinions and their own ideologies and their own political issues and their own sexual preferences and their own philosophical presuppositions, Jesus says, does not matter all authority is given to me. When you meet them, tell them about me. All authority has been given unto me. Therefore, as you go make disciples of all nations, people who live discipline lives, that's what a disciple is. Baptizing them in the Trinitarian name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I'm with you always to the very end of the age. Jesus says that the earth is accountable to him and that every human being who lives on the earth is under his authority and that they are to obey his commands and that there is no authority beyond Jesus. And that if we continue to abide in him that he is with us always. What that means practically is Jesus is with us here today. Scripture says elsewhere

though you do not see him, you love him and are filled with a glorious and inexpressible joy, that Jesus is alive and he has not left us. He has not forsaken us. He has not abandoned us as orphans, that rather through the indwelling ministry, the Holy Spirit, Jesus is with all of the children of God and that Jesus as omniscient, all knowing, omnipresent, all present God. He knows everything and he is in a very real way with us here, even in our church service today. At this point, I have to give you an update. This is the least happy, fun part of my job. I wanted to preach the cool sermon about the ascension of Jesus, whoop you into a frenzy and have the band take it home. That's what I was hoping for. At this point, Jesus not only ascended, but he commissioned us with ministry to do. And in some ways ministry at Marshall is going really well. I'm gonna give you a report card tonight. In some ways this is a brutal time and now I'm gonna talk about money. And some of you say, dang it, I knew he was gonna talk about money. Um, Jesus talked about money. About 25% of the time we speak of it far less than that. We don't pass the plate, but we do need to inform you of some things. You obtained a letter from the elders on the way in. Here's what's going on. How is our ministry going? We're in one of the least church cities in America and we are growing fast. Last week our attendance was up a thousand people from the same Sunday last year. So in one sense, it's going good. We're the 15th fastest growing, 22nd most influential and I think possibly third most hated church in America. I think that's about where we're at. Okay? Now in one sense, things are going really, really well. People are coming, people are coming to Jesus. Lives are getting changed. Things are going really well. Statistically what usually happens is our summer quarter has, you know, sort of a flat giving and flat attendance. And then when the fall kicks in July, August, September, October, that quarter, attendance increases, giving increases and things really go well. What has happened this year. Attendance has gone up. Giving has gone down at the exact same time, which means as we add new staff, new services, as we add new pastors, we have less money to do so than we did four months ago. So much so that we've lost money every one of the last four months in a row. And this is where we find ourselves. Uh, first we have more people giving less money. Uh, secondly, you can read this when you get home. I'll quickly summarize it for you. We have eaten up our reserves. We did have more than \$400,000 of reserves set aside for a rainy day, not anticipating a rainy quarter. Uh, what happened is subsequently that \$400,000 is gone. We're exceedingly tight on cash flow, and that's where we find ourselves. The reason it got eaten up fairly quickly is we have weeks like last week where we missed budget last week alone by \$60,000. When we start losing \$60,000 a week, it doesn't take a long time to eat up your savings account. Uh, thirdly, we will not sacrifice our future for the immediate needs of our present. We have expanded, we have picked up some additional real estate. We do have plans to move from a church of 5,000 to a church of 10,000. We believe that is necessary yet to do that, we had to acquire real estate. We did so at 60 cents on the dollar, which means if we sold all our real estate holdings, we turn about a 40% profit, which in this commercial real estate market is a total blessing. Some would say, well then sell your properties to pay your bills. But that's like saying, I'm hungry. Looking at your leg and saying, well, there's meat. I'll eat it. That's not the best long-term strategy, okay? That's not the best long-term plan. Uh, if we sell any real estate, what we're saying is to pay the bills today. We will not reach any more people tomorrow. We will not expand to other parts of the city, and we

are now done. We we will only do that if things become exceedingly dire, if it becomes catastrophic. Fourthly, we will not live beyond our means, and I'm just telling you where it's at. Uh, we will live within our means. Some churches rack up debt, some people just start getting partial paychecks. Uh, some churches terminate people with no severance. Some people are late. Uh, churches are rather to their accreditors and paying the light bill and such, we don't wanna be that church. We're exceedingly tight. So here's what happened this week. We fired six people telling you what we're doing. Uh, these people were people who love Jesus. They didn't have sin, they didn't have performance issues, didn't have character issues, didn't have doctrinal issues, solely budgetary responses. Six people at Marsh Hill lost their job this week. One resigned voluntarily. So we removed seven staff this week. Uh, it was, uh, that, that's, that meeting was like a funeral. All staff meeting, uh, our retirement contributions, we are ceasing for November and December. Uh, also, every other staff member that remains working for the church is taking an immediate 5% pay cut across the board. Uh, the reason we let these people go quickly is because we can find a way to give them severance through Christmas. Our fear was if we didn't then, uh, we would let them go around Christmas with no severance or benefits, which seemed exceedingly cruel. We have cut reimbursements, cell phone allowances, book budget for the remainder of the year. Uh, beginning in January. We're looking at, uh, reducing the amount we give to every employee's retirement fund. We're also renegotiating our health benefits to reduce those costs. Every budget in the church, every department has been reduced by 30% effective immediately. And this is not the guaranteed end of the cuts. If it continues, we will lay off more people, we will cut more programming, we will provide less offerings if we have to. This is where we are. This is where we are. Jesus is in heaven. Everything's wonderful there. We're on earth. It's kind of a mess. My fifth point is we believe there are many reasons for the situation we find ourselves in, and then as leaders, it is our responsibility to address them all, which we are. The first is Forbes says, for the second year in a row, we're in the most overpriced city in America. Ministry here comes with a very high price tag. Secondly, we have people who are very faithful and people who are very unfaithful. Those who are giving tend to be giving very generously. Those who are not giving tend to be giving nothing. So much so that we even have a few hundred members that have gone through our formal membership process and given us a pledge that are giving nothing, zero, giving zero. What this means is we're not calling those who are the most faithful to sacrifice. Even further, we're asking those who are unfaithful to become faithful. If you are here and you're not a Christian, we do not ask you to give anything. You're our guest. If you're here and you're visiting for the first time, please bear with me. This is family business. If you're here and you're a Christian, are you participating or consuming? That's the question. My great fear is this, that as we grow, it becomes harder to patrol our borders. What we now have, particularly this service and the seven, and this is where my dad tone comes out, is a bunch of consumers. There are some people who give very generously, who serve very faithfully, and then there are those non-Christians that we want to welcome, love, serve, meet with, have a pastor, get with, invest in, see them, meet Jesus. We have people that are without a church and they're needing teaching and growth. We wanna welcome, assimilate, and, and totally do all we can to encourage them, but what we have is we have faithful Christians giving and serving. We have unfaithful Christians taking

what they're giving and serving and sometimes complaining about it, which is even more horrifying. And then there is nothing less for the non-Christians, faithful Christians, giving unfaithful Christians, taking non-Christians, receiving nothing if there is not some repentance. My fear is that we become yet another big bloated fat megachurch with a bunch of consumers who take, don't give and then complain about the quality of the freebie. So much so that I'm actually horrified. I am getting calls from pastors of other churches that you, some of you attend, you don't attend Marc Hill, you take it Marc Hill, you go to another church, you give it another church, you serve at another church. You come here, don't like my sermons. Call your pastor, have him call me to talk about the sermon that you didn't like at the church. You don't go to, I mean, I don't know if you know this, we're full. I don't know if you know this. The last thing I wanna do is add a service for a bunch of people who don't care and go somewhere else and complain about the freebie we give, replicating those people. I, I would rather take a tire iron to my frontal lobe. You know, I mean, let me just be frank with you and say that if you are a leader at another church, you lead worship or you're a pastor, are you welcome to come to our evening services? Totally. We have pastors who come here just for refreshment, for Bible teaching, for encouragement. We say, you're serving Jesus. Praise me to God if we can be of any encouragement to you, if you're leading, serving at another church, you're pouring yourself out on Sunday and you come here just to worship Jesus, we say, great. If you don't have a church home and you're visiting to see if this is where God would have you, we say, great. If you're a non-Christian, man, we love you and, and it's, it's really most important that we maintain seats and service for you. But if you're someone who goes to another church or maybe you go to two or three churches, you don't really give anywhere, you don't really serve anywhere. You don't really participate anywhere. You're very critical. You're one of the bloggers, the emailers, the neat nicks, the nut jobs, the wing nuts, the nitpicks for the love of God. Get over it. I mean, repent, acknowledge that it may not be a problem with every church and Christian, the only consistent variable in all of your frustration is you. I'm serious, man. I'm just sick of it, you know? I mean I, I've gotten emails recently. I don't go to your church, but I really hate this, that and the other thing, and I was meeting with your pastors and I didn't like what they said. I the heck. I mean we have people who go to other churches that schedule meetings to meet with our pastors, lie that they don't actually go to the church, have no intentions and three or four meetings in say, oops. Yeah, I do go to another church and I just lied to you 'cause you guys have free biblical counseling. You know, I'm also not taking your wife on a date, right? There's certain things that are on you. Yeah, I'm just sort of feeling it today. So we find ourselves in America's least church city and if you are a disciple, your responsibility is to make disciples not be a consumer of the work of the disciples and the critic of the service of the disciples. I mean, we're in the least church city in America. We are dead in the water if we cannot progress, and some of you are exceedingly faithful, not asking you to give or serve more. I'm asking those who do call Marcel home to participate for those who are visiting from other churches, but they are faithful in their service to Jesus and leadership in their church to feel welcome here. But for some of you, you need to pick a church. You need to pick a, a path of repentance. You need to plug in, whether it's here or the church that you attend in the morning. You need to give, you need to serve, you need to, you need to pour yourself out for the love

and benefit and blessing of others. Have you learned nothing from the example of Jesus who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many? Have you learned Nothing? I mean, I keep getting pressure. We need to add another service. I'm not sure we do. I think that certain people should go back to their church. I think that other people should connect to this one. I think that everyone should decide what Jesus has called him to do, and what we don't need is all of our seeds being taken by consumers. That's what we do not need. Do I hate you? No. Do I love you? Yeah. Is it frustrating? Incredibly. Can you imagine how frustrating it is for people who don't give, don't serve, don't care. Our Christians have been for a while, go to other churches, come to this one and then send us complaints about their brothers and sisters serving them free of charge as volunteers and paying for their seats that they didn't feel that it was good enough for them. That's just wicked. That's horrible. If you came to my house and yelled at my wife because the free dinner wasn't up to your standard, I would punch your throat. That's how it would go. Let me tie it all back to my original point. We'll bring it around. Jesus took a great risk when he ascended into heaven and that was the risk of being forgotten. I would ask you that question. Have you totally forgotten Jesus? He's not on the news every night like the President. He's not on the front page of the paper. Every morning when Jesus left this earth, he left himself open to the possibility that some, if not many would totally forget about him because he was gone. If you are a Christian, I would just ask you, have you forgotten about Jesus? Have you forgotten about the commands of Jesus? Have you forgotten about Jesus during your day? Are you talking to Jesus, which is prayer? When you sin, are you running to Jesus for forgiveness? When you're tempted, do you run to Jesus for courage and strength, to say no to sin and yes to holiness when you're paying your bills? Do you remember Jesus? Do you forget Jesus? When you think of your time and your talent and your treasure, are you, are you remembering or are you forgetting Jesus? I'm not trying to guilt you, but I am asking how big is your Jesus? How much authority does he have? How much of your life does he have the right to say that is mine? If not, who sits on the throne? If not, who rules and reigns? If not, who is the king, the Lord the God? Is it the real Jesus or do you have a little Jesus who seems to tolerate you because somehow he sits at your right hand? That is the question. Some of you, some of you have much to repent of and much to be ashamed of. Some of you will hear well done, good and faithful servant. I judge not your heart, but I do lay before you that question. Jesus says, where your treasure is that indicates where your heart is. Money is one of the ways in addition to time, in addition to passion, in addition to energy, that we find our God, that which is of highest value, greatest worth, supreme joy to us. I'm not just asking for your money. Jesus isn't just asking for your money. He wants more than that. He wants you. If you call yourself Christian, ask yourself with Jesus ascending into heaven, where have I possibly forgotten about him altogether? Where do I in my life think that he does not rule and reign as Lord and God and sovereign? Where in my life do I think that this is my jurisdiction and Jesus has no right to that aspect of my existence? If I claim to be Christian, can I also claim that without completely contradicting myself as a hypocrite? At this point we always call you to repentance. My hope would be that just because Jesus has ascended, that he end his commands would not be forgotten. That you would come to repentance if you're a non-Christian, that you would acknowledge that Jesus is alive in God and you would give him your sin

and you would become a Christian. Today. For those of you who are Christians and God has been good to you and you have responded faithfully, I want you to thank Jesus that you have like John, this clear picture of him seated on a throne in charge, and you have responded to him well by the grace that he has given you. For those of you who perhaps are convicted because you are a person who quite frankly has forgotten Jesus because he has ascended, you think he is gone, but he is with us always, even to the end of the age, he promised and he is here with us and I want you to respond to him in repentance, wherever that may be needed and required. When you're ready, you can partake of communion, which is remembering the body and blood of Jesus. You can give of your tithes and offerings. You can sing and celebrate and worship Jesus. You could pray to Jesus that Jesus is alive, that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus is God, that Jesus is king, that Jesus is mediator and that positionally we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies. Though today we have some work to do on the earth and by God's grace we shall do that work. I assure you of that.