Ponder Jesus' Identity

Reflections, prayers, scripture, and recorded new hymns for public worship and personal devotions

from the series: Fresh Views of Timeless Truths

Ken Bible

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Scriptures on Christ the Tabernacle

John 1:14

The Word became flesh and dwelt *[margin: tabernacled]* among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (NASB)

Hebrews 8:1-6

Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. (NASB)

Hebrews 9:1-14

Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, but into the second, only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience, since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (NASB)

Christ the Tabernacle

Exodus 25 – 30; 36 – 40; John 1:14; 6:48-58; Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:1-14

God gave the Old Testament tabernacle so that our senses, minds, and imaginations might be permeated with the glory of His presence. Jesus Christ is that tabernacle perfected, its intent completed. The tabernacle was only a copy. Jesus is the full presence of God now living within and among us, forever uniting heaven and earth. He is the law of God, all that is pleasing to the Father, no longer engraved on stone tablets, but written on the hearts of His people. He is the Bread of the Presence, spreading an eternal feast for all who come. He is the Light forever burning, illuminating the whole world. He is the incense of God's Presence. the fragrance of His holiness, the aroma of His unfailing love. He engulfs us in the richness, the texture, the color. the beauty of heaven itself. He is the final, perfect sacrifice, making us right with the Father. He is the Great High Priest, uniting us with the Father. In Christ, the Transcendent God fills our souls and our senses, our daily routines and our highest dreams. Jesus Christ enfolds all we are in all He is.

Christ in Psalm 67

Job 26:11-14; Psalm 67; Ephesians 1:3; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 2:1-3, 9-10; Hebrews 2:11



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PSALM 67 L.M.

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Here Is My Servant

700 years before the coming of Christ, this is how God described Him. What a beautiful, accurate picture of the Jesus Christ we know! This is the way Jesus does His work, both in our world and in our individual hearts.

God says, "Look, here is my servant! See the One I have chosen! This is the One in whom I delight. I will equip Him with my own Spirit, and He will bring My justice to all the nations.

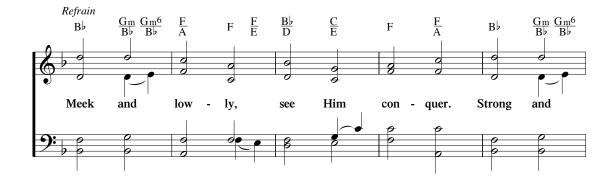
He won't act like other conquerors. He won't raise His voice or call attention to Himself or rally an army in the streets. He will be so gentle that He wouldn't tear a bent blade of grass or snuff out a smoldering candle.

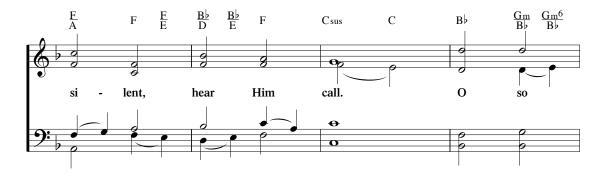
Yet He will not falter and He will not fail and He will not grow discouraged till He has established My justice throughout all peoples. The farthest corners of the earth will put their hope in Him." (Isaiah 42:1-4, paraphrase)

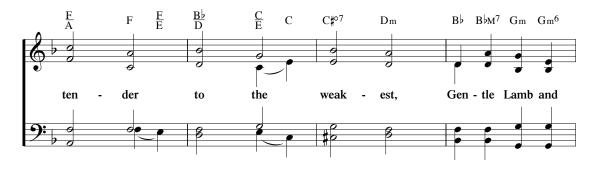
Hymn recording: See the Servant

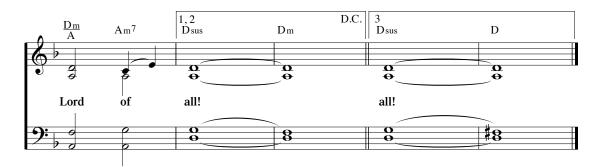


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Luke 2:21-40 (NASB)

And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

"Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A Light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

The Light of the World

Luke 2:21-40

Jesus is not just the central figure of Christianity. He is the central figure of all history, of earth and heaven. He is the Creator, the Sustainer of all that is, seen and unseen, the Sovereign Word of the Sovereign God.

He is not just the wisest person who ever lived.
In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
He is not just the leader of one group, culture, or movement.
He is the King of all Kings and the Lord of all Lords.

Isaiah said:

"See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you." (Isaiah 60:2, NIV) Jesus is the Light of the World, and as He is lifted up, all nations, all peoples will come to Him.

> We know what the holy and wise of all ages have longed to discover. We see Jesus Christ. How very blessed we are!

Hymn recording: Light of Every Nation



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Colossians 1:15-20

(NASB)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth. visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities ---all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church: and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

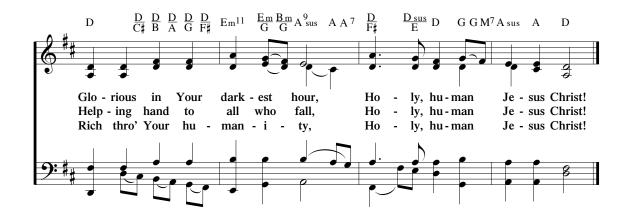
Holy and Human

Father, as I long to see You and know You, You show me Jesus. In Him I see the transcendent God in a form I can understand. In Him You are human and touchable. In Him You are my Father and my Brother. In Jesus, Your holiness is no longer foreign and frightening, but beautiful and desirable. In Him, You prove that I can be pure, yet thoroughly human. I can be Your true child here and now, in this present, evil world. I can be joyful, loving, peaceful, and perfectly pleasing to You. I can be one with You, Father, in Jesus Christ.

Hymn recording: Holy, Human Jesus Christ



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John 3:22-36 (NASB)

After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing. John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized— for John had not yet been thrown into prison.

Therefore there arose a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified, behold, He is baptizing and all are coming to Him."

John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease.

"He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

All the Life of God

John 3:22-36

Near the end of the ministry of John the Baptist, the spotlight that had been on him was shifting to Jesus Christ. John accepted his fading role joyfully:

"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30, NASB).

Earlier John had introduced Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, NASB)

and

"the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33, NASB).

Now John gives us three more snapshots of the Messiah, raising our eyes to show us all that Christ will be for God's people:

Jesus is the Bridegroom.

He came to bring about a joyful, loving, eternal union between God and His people.

Jesus is from heaven,

from the unseen Father. He came to show us wonderful realities that we cannot know or experience any other way.

Jesus is the fullness of God. He speaks and lives all the truth about God. If we simply trust Him, all the life of God is ours forever.

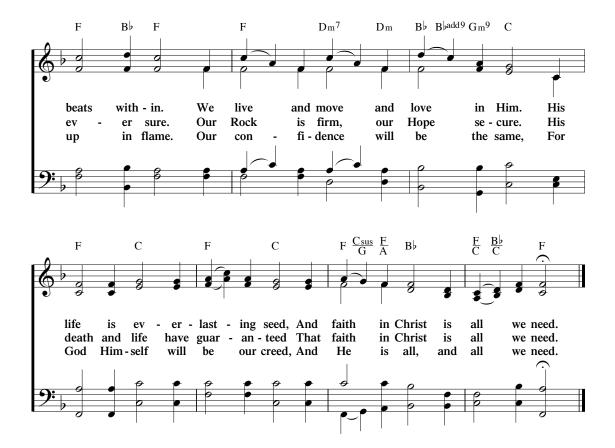
Hymn recording: All We Need



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Scriptures on Jesus' Personal Manner

Luke 15:1-2

Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

John 4:7-10

There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

Mark 10:13-16

they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all." And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.

Matthew 7:28-29

When Jesus had finished these words *[the Sermon on the Mount]*, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Luke 21:37-38

Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet. And all the people would get up early in the morning to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

Mark 15:39

When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

What Was Jesus Really Like?

What was Jesus really like as a person? What IS He really like? If we were to physically spend some relaxed time with Him, how would we honestly describe Him?

We have no photos, movies, or even personality profiles of Him. But we have four accounts of how He lived and interacted with a wide variety of people in various situations. What do their reactions tell you about Him?

SINNERS: Jesus related comfortably to the morally disreputable people of His day. Other religious people shunned them. Jesus spent casual time with them. And they enjoyed being with Him. (Matthew 9:9-13; 11:16-19; Luke 15:1-2; 19:1-10)

WOMEN & CHILDREN: Jesus struck up a socially-unconventional conversation with a woman – a Samaritan woman at that, one who had been married five times and was living with another. Then notice how the Samaritans, who were alienated from other Jews, were drawn to Jesus and wanted Him to stay with them (John 4:1-42). When His disciples thought little children were a waste of precious time, Jesus rebuked them. He liked children, made time for them, and held them in His arms (Mark 10:13-16). Women believed in Jesus, generously supported Him, and even traveled with Him (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 15:40-41).

THE COMMON PEOPLE: Large crowds rose early and traveled long distances to hear Him. They sometimes followed Him around for days. Though Jesus was officially unlearned, they sensed an unusual authority in the way He spoke (Matthew 7:28-29; Mark 8:1-8; 12:37b; Luke 21:38; John 7:14-15).

ROMANS: Generally, Romans knew little about God and had little use for Jews. But a Roman centurion sensed Jesus' spiritual authority and trusted Him completely (Matthew 8:5-13). Pilate could tell Jesus was innocent even as the Jewish authorities accused Him (Matthew 27:18), and a Roman soldier, watching Him die, knew He was the Son of God (Mark 15:39).

The lowly people of Jesus' day were drawn to Him. What does that tell you about Him?

Hymn recording: Jesus, Full of Truth and Grace



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Mark 4:35-41

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.

A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Who's in Your Boat?

Some of the disciples were experienced fishermen. They felt the wind. They saw the waves. They sensed mortal danger, and they were frantic.

But in their fear, they had failed to consider one thing. They didn't realize Who was in their boat.

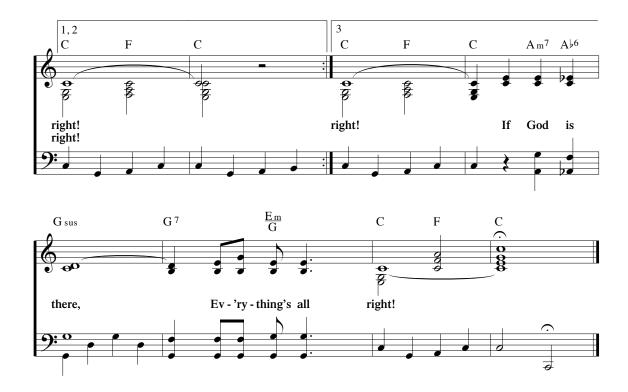
The next time the winds rise and the waves pound and your world is rocking out of control, remember Who is in your boat. Your world is never out of His control. He's never lost a passenger yet!

Hymn recording: Everything's All Right!



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John 10:1-18, 27-28 (NASB)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."

This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.

So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand."

The Good Shepherd

A Prayer based on John 10:1-18, 27-28

Good Shepherd, lead me through this day. Call me by name, and help me hear Your voice in my heart. May I follow no voice but Yours.

Lead me out, Lord. Always go with me and before me. Lead me to Your provision for today: Your bread, Your work, Your rest.

Good Shepherd, You are the door. Through You I enter into life. You are always standing in front of me, protecting me from the Evil One.

Good Shepherd, You lay down Your life for me. I am Your own. The same knowing that binds You to Your Father now binds me to You.

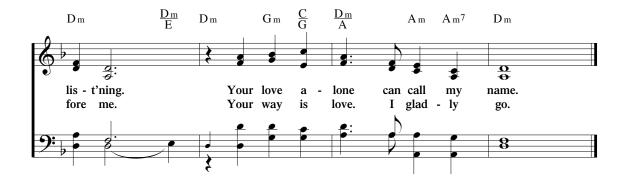
You are love. Speak, Lord. My heart is listening.

Hymn recording: Good Shepherd

Good Shepherd



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Matthew 13:17

(NASB)

Truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Luke 11:31-32

(NASB)

The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and

behold,

something greater than Solomon is here.

The men of Nineveh will stand up

with this generation at the judgment and

condemn it,

because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold,

something greater than Jonah is here.

All We Need

Father, how many great Old Testament saints longed to see Jesus Christ! How many longed to know Him as we know Him, to be filled with His Spirit, to walk even a moment in His personal presence!

People today would travel around the world to see Abraham or Moses or Solomon.

One greater than Abraham is here. One greater than Moses is here. One greater than Solomon is here. One greater than the greatest entertainer is here. One greater than money or comfort or fame is here. One greater than every other good is here.

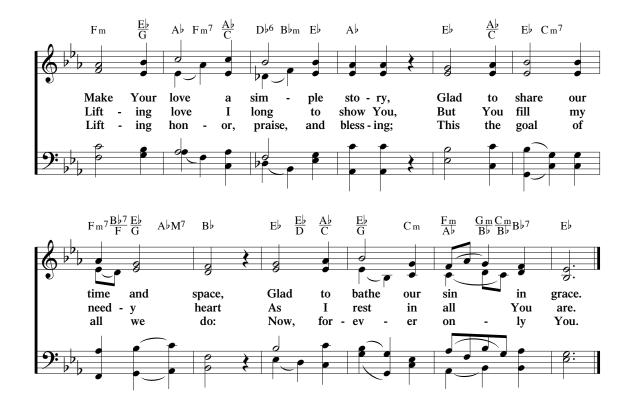
Father, in Jesus Christ You have left no need unmet, no thirst unsatisfied, no hunger unfilled. All the wisdom, all the peace, all the holiness, all the life we could ever want are ours in Christ Jesus.

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV)

Hymn recording: <u>Jesus</u>



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Matthew 13:44-46

(NASB)

"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it."

The Supreme Good

Matthew 13:44-46

Material riches bring only temporary comfort, shallow stimulation, and a false sense of security. What do you truly want? Meaning? Peace? Security? Maybe comfort? Satisfaction? Are you longing for pleasure that truly lasts, or perhaps life that never dies? Go to the Source. Jesus Christ is all the fullness of God Himself. He Himself is life's ultimate treasure. He Himself is that one perfect pearl of supreme value. Every other good, every other goal is a mirage and a passing distraction. He is life that never ends. He is love that satisfies deeply, endlessly. He is security that can never be threatened. As you trust Him,

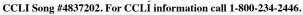
He will make you more than you ever dreamed possible, more than you ever imagined. He will freely give you, not the riches of *having*, but the riches of *being*.

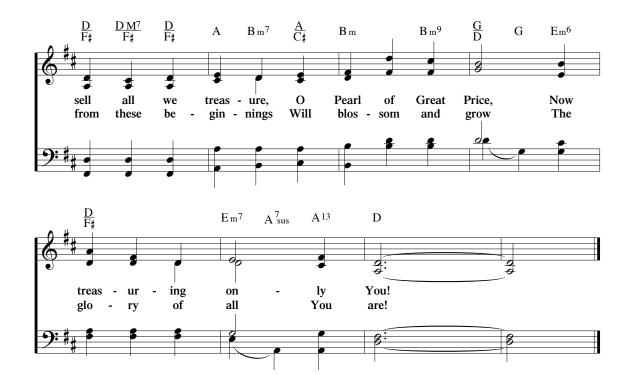
Release everything else and embrace Jesus Christ.

Hymn recording: <u>Pearl of Great Price</u>



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Scriptures on Christ, Our Living Hope

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (NASB)

Colossians 1:27

God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Hebrews 6:17-20

Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf.

1 Peter 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (NASB)

Our Living Hope

When you can't believe that God could forgive you, look to Jesus. He is your assurance of complete forgiveness. (1 John 1:9) He is the final, perfect sacrifice for all your sins. (John 1:29; Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:14) When holy living seems impossible, look to Jesus. God has not abandoned you to your weakness. Jesus Christ is your holiness. (Hebrews 4:14-16) As you simply trust Him, He is everything you need to lead a godly life. (2 Peter 1:3) When the future seems uncertain, look to Jesus. He is your future. He is your destiny. God's sure, unchangeable purpose is to make you like Him. (Ephesians 1:3-5; 1 John 3:1-2) Jesus Christ is the completion of all the Father has ever wanted for you. He is all the fulfillment of all God's eternal promises. (2 Corinthians 1:20) He is your living hope, now and forever. (1 Peter 1:3)

Hymn recording: The Glories of Christ



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Colossians 3:1-4

(NASB)

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

See Jesus Christ

See Him now, the Jewish peasant, the Victim, the One rejected, ridiculed, brutalized, and executed as a blasphemer and traitor. See Him now in all the glory that is His from all eternity. See Him risen to the right hand of the Father. He is seated, His task complete. He has wiped away all our sins, completely and forever. He has poured out the Holy Spirit of God Himself on every person who will receive Him. He is our Brother, the Lord of all things in this world and the next, all things seen and unseen,

in heaven and earth.

We are secure and eternally, extravagantly blessed in Him.

Hymn recording: Jesus, Living God!



WORDS: Ken Bible MUSIC: Ken Bible, based on a Traditional Folk Tune ASCENSION 3.3.8.D.w.Ref.

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Romans 11:36

(NASB)

From Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.

The Difference He Makes

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born.

He did none of the things one usually associates with greatness. He had no credientials but Himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to His enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.

While He was dying, His executioners gambled for His clothing, the only property He had on earth. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave, through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race and the leader of mankind's progress. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that One Solitary Life.

--"One Solitary Life," anonymous

The reading above not only describes the historical Jesus and His impact on human life but also describes the way He came to me and the difference He's made.

Jesus came to me personally, without arm-twisting, without fanfare. But I have never been the same.

Over the years since I first met and trusted Jesus, He's done many wonderful things for me. He has been there in love at every point of need. But one miracle continues to amaze me and fill me with gratitude: *Jesus brings to us the power to be.*

Have you struggled with the frustration and guilt of knowing the person you want to be but being unable to live that way? Jesus is that needed power. When we accept Him into our lives, He is the presence of God within us. As we trust Him, He changes us from the inside. He enables us to live lives that are full, loving, and good. That is true freedom!

No wonder Jesus has influenced our race more than armies or political leaders ever could. He is the power and love of God in the human heart.

Discover Him.

Discover Jesus.

Hymn recording: Discover Jesus Christ

