

Matthew Chapter 12 v 38 - 42

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Date: 30 March 2018

Preacher: Ben Hutton

[0 : 00] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. I'll be giving a special welcome to our visiting preacher in the notices, but let's begin by praising God.

That's why we've come to worship the Lord and sing number 239. Glory, glory, everlasting be to him who bore the cross. Thank you.

[2 : 19] And chapter 15 and beginning at verse 21. A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way from the country.

And they forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull.

Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him, dividing up his clothes.

They cast lots to see what each would get. It was the third hour when they crucified him.

The written notice of the charge against him read, The king of the Jews. They crucified two robbers with him, one on the right hand and one on his left.

[3 : 35] Those who passed by held insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, So, you who are going to destroy the temple and build it again in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself.

In the same way, the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. He saved others, they said, but he can't save himself.

Let this Christ, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe. And those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

At the sixth hour, darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.

And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabdaktanai, which means, My God, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[4 : 53] And some of those standing near heard him and they said, Look, he's calling on Elijah. Let's come before the Lord in prayer.

Let's all pray together. Father, whenever we come to your word, we are solemnized at hearing the very words from God written for our learning and for our good, but even more when we come to the narrative of the crucifixion of our Lord.

And words almost fail us. We thank you for the words of that hymn, tasting death. He was tasting death, the death deserved by us, that he, the sinless one, died when we should have died for our sins.

And he died for us. We thank you for the love of Christ. We thank you for the love of Christ. We thank you for the love of Christ.

The love of Christ is so vast. when we see what he did for us. And when we see not only the agony of the physical suffering, but also the unbelievable spiritual agony of separation from the Father, something we can't really comprehend.

[6 : 32] So we thank you that what was the shame of the cross on that day to all the onlookers. Thank you that that becomes for us the glory of the Lamb, that we see that it was the Lamb who was slain for us.

And so, as we look upon him and we read these verses, we see he was forsaken by all men. Not only forsaken, but insulted and mocked and taunted and tortured.

But even more, as we were thinking, forsaken by his heavenly Father, the darkness showing the spiritual darkness into which the Lord entered.

Separation from the one from whom he was with from eternity. And bearing the wrath of the Father, something we can't imagine. So, Lord, we thank you that he died for us.

And then those words, he breathed his last, which seemed a final defeat. That moment of death becomes our only hope because he died for us.

[7 : 53] And we thank you that we can look beyond Good Friday and we know what happened two days later. So we thank you for the resurrection of the Lord. Amen.

Which showed that death had been defeated. And so Jesus is the name above all names. And we want to worship him.

We want to worship the Lord Jesus Christ tonight. So come down among us in your grace and mercy. Just speak to us. Warm our hearts. And enable us to cleave more closely to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Go to sing again. Hymn number 176.

176. 176. It's a pleasure to welcome our visiting preacher tonight, who is Ben Hutton, sitting on the front row.

[9 : 03] I think it's the first time you've come here to preach, is it? Ben is the pastor of the Thornhill Baptist Church near Dewsbury. And I got to know Ben quite well because it's two or even three times I've been on the London Christian Answer.

And Ben leads that. And I have an easy time just being one of the team. But Ben leads it, which is a huge responsibility. We're out there in Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square and Covent Garden.

And really wonderful times. So thank you very much, Ben, for coming this evening. I think there's a cup of tea afterwards. Is that right? A cup of tea? And then just to mention that there's a particular book that we're encouraging folk to read and give away by Val Grieve, a lawyer who considers the evidence for the resurrection.

I actually met Val Grieve many, many years ago in Manchester. And so a really, really excellent book. Very slim, won't take long, and really good.

So there's several copies there by the hymn books to take. Well, we're reading the narrative of the crucifixion. And so we're going to have a second reading.

[10 : 15] And I think Linda's going to come and read. Continuing in Mark chapter 15 from verse 35 or 36, is it?

Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff and offered it to Jesus to drink.

Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down, he said. And with a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

And when the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus saw how he died, he said, Surely this man was the Son of God.

Some women were watching from a distance. And among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger, and of Joseph and Salome.

[11 : 29] In Galilee, these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many of the women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

It was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath. So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died.

When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of the rock.

And then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, saw where he was laid.

[12 : 45] When the centurion, yes, that's it. Let's continue our worship, shall we, with number 261, hymn number 261.

Now Tom's going to bring a final reading before the sermon.

He's taking from Matthew 12, verse 38 to 42, the sign of Jonah.

Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, Teacher, we want to see a sign from you. He answered, A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For Jonah was there three days and three nights in the belly of the huge fish. So the son of man will be there three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

[14 : 21] The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.

The queen of the south will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here.

Thank you for God's word. Well, a very good evening to you. It's good to be here. It's a great pleasure and a delight.

As Richard said, I'm the pastor of Thornhill Baptist Church, which is on the outskirts of Dewsbury, where I've been laboring for six and a half years.

And it's a real pleasure to be able to be here this evening and to stand shoulder to shoulder on those great twin pillars of the Christian gospel, of the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[15 : 36] Let us pray once more and ask for God's blessing as we come to his word, shall we? Let us pray. Our heavenly Father, your Son has said, without me you can do nothing.

Oh Father, we are totally and utterly and unreservedly dependent on you and on your Spirit. Father, we thank you that when we come to the word of God, we come to the very lips of God.

Lord, we are not studying the mere opinions of man. We are studying your word. And Father, we pray that you would open up your word to us now as we think about these very crucial issues of Jesus Christ.

Please, oh Lord, help me to be faithful to your word. Help me to preach it clearly and accurately. And for those of us who are here listening, that we would hear with a reference to taking everything back to the touchstone of your word and to being blessed and to once again gaze upon that crucified, risen and exalted Lord Jesus Christ.

Hear us now, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. I guess many of you may have been to Sunday school. Or nonetheless, I'm sure that you've heard of the story or read of the story of Jonah the prophet.

[17 : 14] Whole book in our Bibles. It's only four chapters long. It doesn't take very long to read through the book of Jonah. And it has many great lessons for us.

And not least, about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which we think about particularly at this time of year. Although we're not to forget the resurrection or the death of Christ at any time of year, are we?

We're to always remember that our Lord Jesus Christ died and rose again. And the story of Jonah that's often taught in Sunday schools and is often read in our Bibles and often preached on and rightly so, gives us great lessons for us about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Well, how do we know? Because Jesus tells us. Who's the best person to interpret the Old Testament? Jesus. And Jesus tells us that Jonah is like Jesus.

But he also tells us that Jesus is greater than Jonah. And so that's what we're looking at this evening on our Good Friday. We're looking at Jonah and Jesus.

[18 : 27] The parallels, the similarities, but also the contrasts. Jonah and Jesus. So we've got two things that we're going to look at tonight.

All very simple and no doubt glorious to us. And the first thing we're going to see is this. That Jonah is like Jesus. Jonah is what we call a type.

Of Jesus. And then later on with the Lord's help we're going to look how Jesus is greater than Jonah. So these two things then, first of all we're going to look at the fact that Jonah is like Jesus.

Jonah is like Jesus. Now if you've really read your Bible more than the book of Jonah, you will know exactly where Jonah comes from. We're told in the Bible where he comes from.

We are. In a place called Two Kings. Chapter 14, verse 25. Tucked away there. Tells us that Jonah, the son of Amittai. So it's talking about this Jonah from the Old Testament.

[19 : 33] Came from Gath-Hepha. That's the place where he came from. His father was Amittai. Not a very popular name is it? Not very common. Have we got any Amittais here?

No, no Amittais didn't think so. But his father was called Amittai. And what was Jonah's job? He was a prophet. He was God's spokesman.

God's messenger. And God had a commission for him. You can read it in Jonah chapter 1. The word of the Lord came to Jonah.

And what was that message? He said, I want you to get up. And I want you to go to Nineveh. This great city.

In fact, actually, it's very good to look at repeated words in the scriptures, isn't it? You've got an old Bible and maybe a red pen. And underline repeated words.

[20 : 35] And what will you find? You'll find the word great in Jonah again and again and again. The weave within the tapestry of this book of Jonah is the word great. There was a great fish.

There was a great storm. Even Jesus said it. There's a great fish. And God said to Jonah that he wanted him to go to this great city.

This vast city. So it wasn't just a city. It was a vast city. And what did Jonah do? Did he obey? Did he disobey? He disobeyed, didn't he?

He went down to Joppa and he found a boat there. Maybe he thought it was guidance, perhaps. And there was this boat that was going in the opposite direction. So what does he do? He pays the fare and he gets on board and he goes away to Tarshish.

Away from the presence of the Lord. He disobeyed the word of God. It's a very serious thing, you know, to disobey the word of God.

[21 : 40] And Jonah did it. And this is where Jonah is actually what we call an anti-type of Christ. He's different to Christ here, isn't he? He knows the word of God.

He's heard the word of God. There's no problem with Jonah's comprehension. There's nothing wrong with his ears. And he disobeys. And he disobeys deliberately. And he goes in the opposite direction.

As you may well know. And he goes away from the word of God. And this is where Jonah is not like Jesus Christ, is he? Now do you think that we're like Jonah or do you think we're like Jesus here?

We're like Jonah, aren't we? We're sinners. Might not be very politically correct, but it's the truth, isn't it? Sin is around us and sin is within us.

And we all have it. From the top of society down to the bottom. It doesn't matter what job you have. It doesn't matter how much money you have in your bank balance. It doesn't matter what colour of skin you have.

[22 : 42] It doesn't matter what church you go to. Every single one of us are sinners. And it's vital we understand it. And we've not only sinned against each other, serious though that be, we have actually sinned against God.

You and I have sinned against a holy God. We're like Jonah. We've sinned. We're guilty before God. And however much we paper the cracks, however much we try to get around it, however much we try and dance around the issue, however much we try and blame the brain, however much we try and blame our upbringing and our circumstances, the Bible is clear.

We are sinners. Just like Jonah. But Jesus Christ, as we'll discover, wasn't a sinner, was he? He's perfect.

Tempted in all points, just as we are, yet without sin. So Jonah actually is not like Jesus in that sense, but he went down to this boat and actually had the audacity to sleep.

Incredible, isn't it? He slept. And there was a wind. And there was a great storm. There's our word again. There's a great storm. And people were afraid.

[23 : 56] And mariners, seasoned mariners, were petrified. So they go down and they see Jonah asleep. And what do they say to Jonah? They say, arise, call on your God.

Maybe your God will do something. And he comes clean, doesn't he? He says, it's because of me that this storm has arisen. There's only one thing for it.

I want you to pick me up and I want you to throw me into the sea. And then it will become calm again. Well, they tried to row hard to get to the shore. But what did they find?

It grew more and more tempestuous. It grew more and more vigorous, did the storm. So they said, okay, there's one thing for it. We're going to pick Jonah up and we're going to throw him into the sea.

And what happened to the sea? It became calm again, didn't it? And what happened to Jonah? Was that the end of Jonah? You would have thought it would be, wouldn't you? You would have thought he'd be drowned. Was he drowned?

[24 : 55] What happened? It's a great fish and it swallowed Jonah up. The Lord prepared this great, great fish and it swallowed Jonah in Jonah chapter 1 verse 17.

And Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and for three nights. Now, does that ring any bells from what was read to us? Yes, it does, isn't it?

That just as Jonah was in this great fish that was prepared by God for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man, Jesus says, will be in the heart of the earth, that means the grave, that means the tomb, for three days and three nights.

Jonah is a type of Jesus Christ. We know what a type is, don't we? We see someone doing something and we say, that's typical. That's typical. Well, Jonah going into the belly of the fish for three days and three nights and then being spat out again is what we call typical.

It was typical of Jesus Christ. It was a type of Jesus Christ. And it's a type all those years before of Jesus' death and resurrection that we're celebrating at Easter.

[26 : 12] And it's glorious, isn't it? Here's Jonah. Maybe you thought his end had come. Get swallowed up in this belly of the fish. And it's a type of Jesus' death.

Jesus died. It's the very central point of Christianity, isn't it? It's the death of Jesus Christ. The very focal point, the very foundation, the very essence of Jesus, of Nazareth dying on a cross.

He died for our sins. And just like some of the experiences, of course, is not perfect, is it? The analogies and the parallels between Jonah and Jesus. Jonah had some awful experiences.

He says he cried out from Sheol. Well, the Lord cried out from his Sheol from his death on the cross. Jonah, to all intents and purposes, was abandoned.

There he was on his own in the belly of this fish, this great fish. And in many senses, we can link that to Jesus Christ, can't we? Did Jesus Christ, what was he like on the cross?

[27 : 20] He was abandoned, even by his Father, who couldn't look upon his own son, but had to turn his face away. And his son cries out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

With the voice of dereliction that was on the cross. And he's abandoned, just like Jonah was. Except, of course, Jonah was in a belly of a fish, and our Lord was on a Roman cross.

But Jesus Christ goes through this experience that is typified in Jonah. He dies, did our Lord. Goes through this horrendous thing of abandonment for our sins.

We have to maintain the evangelical doctrine of the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Don't we? So central that what Jesus did on that cross was he died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.

And here's one of the references. All these hundreds of years before, pointing ahead to the very heart of our Christian belief, here in Jonah, this prophet. And we must always preach the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

[28 : 38] Three days, three nights, was Jonah in this fish. Three days, and three nights, was the Lord Jesus Christ in the heart of the earth, in the grave.

Then what happened to Jonah? He spat out, after he's repented, where our Lord didn't need to repent, but he spat out his Jonah to newness of life.

And our Lord, as we'll be thinking about on Easter Sunday, arose. He rose from the depths, from the grave to newness of life, to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, bodily, physically, literally.

He wasn't a phantom. He wasn't just some sort of ghostly figure that was floating around in the ether somewhere. He bodily rose from the grave, which is why he said to his disciples, give me something to eat.

because he had bodily risen again. And he rose. And it's so central to this Christian gospel, is the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[30 : 00] Just as Jonah went down, our Lord went down. And just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish, three days and three nights, our Lord was in the heart of the earth, dead for three days and three nights, and rose again victoriously, triumphantly, and defeated death, never to die again.

How much of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ do you think about? Do you live in the light of this cross?

This amazing cross when Jesus Christ took all our sins upon himself and went through a worse experience than Jonah. When he took upon himself our sins, our sins of thought.

Are you ever annoyed with yourself or thinking some of the things you think of? Am I the only one? Or saying the words that we say that are hurtful, am I the only one?

Or treating Sunday like Monday, am I the only one? Or coveting, or lusting, we're sinners and all of that was laid on Christ and then he arose three days later, defeated death and now we don't serve a dead saviour, who do we serve?

[31 : 27] A risen Lord who's alive and you know ask me how I know he lives? He lives, within my heart. That's the Christian's testimony, isn't it?

He lives within me. This risen Lord comes into our lives. He's conquered death. Jonah is like Jesus, isn't he?

Secondly, Jesus is greater than Jonah. He is. Now what happened in that passage that was read to us kindly earlier on? Verse 40, For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Then it says this in verse 41, The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

And this is what it says, There is somebody greater than Jonah.

[32 : 35] Psalm 45, verse 2, says this, You are fairer than the sons of men. That although Jonah was a type of Jesus Christ, and in many ways he was, just like a prophet, they were both prophets, just as they were commissioned, they were both commissioned, but yet Jesus is so much greater than Jonah, isn't he?

How is Jesus Christ greater than Jonah? How can Jesus, the Son of Man, say that a greater than Jonah is here? Well, there are many ways.

You ever thought about it? Jesus is greater than Jonah in his person. What did we think about Jonah?

Was he squeaky clean? No. No. And not just in chapter 1 either. You read Jonah chapter 4. He got in a strop. He got angry.

Did our Lord ever get angry in a bad sense? No. Jonah was annoyed. Did you ever get in a strop? We all do, don't we?

[33 : 47] Do you ever get angry? We all do, don't we? And Jonah was angry. And why was he angry? He was angry because God was being merciful. Do you know, that's why Jonah, by the way, ran away.

Do you know why he ran away? He didn't run away because he was scared. You need to forget about those silly storybooks that tell you that. He didn't run away because he was scared. He wasn't scared at all. We're told in chapter 4 why he ran away.

Why did Jonah run away? He ran away because he knew that God would be merciful to Gentiles, to non-Jews. And he didn't want that and that's why he gets in a strop because that happened exactly as Jonah thought it would happen.

Exactly. God was merciful to the Ninevites and Jonah didn't want that and so he got into a strop. But did Jesus ever get into a strop when God is merciful to sinners?

Did our Lord have a narrow heart? No. What happened when one of the disciples, John, they came to him and they said, we saw other disciples casting out demons and we forbade him.

[34 : 56] Jesus said this, whoever's not against us is for us. Our Lord had a large heart, didn't he? A very large heart and we should as well.

But Jonah didn't. He was stropky. And Jesus Christ is the perfect antitype, isn't he, of Jonah. He willingly got on with his commission.

Lo, I've come in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do your will, oh my God, and your law is within my inward part. Jesus Christ delighted to do the Father's will who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame.

He wanted to see sinners converted so much so that when he could have called those 12 legions of angels to rescue him, did he call those 12 legions of angels to rescue him?

Of course he didn't because he went through with it. Hallelujah, what a saviour, isn't he? And he went through with it. That he actually went through with the actual cross, with all that that entailed and with all that that meant.

[36 : 07] And the results are glorious and it's a joy to Christ. Believer, by the way, when you get to heaven it won't be that Christ will be sort of just ushering in you a little bit and just say, yeah, okay, just come in, just sit at the back of heaven.

He'll be joyful to see you. He'll be pleased to see you in heaven. He'll say, come in, like you would with a relative coming into a feast.

That's what he'll do, won't he? When you get to glory, believer, Jesus will welcome you. He has joy. He's the anti-type. A greater than Jonah is here. Greater than Jonah.

Far greater than Jonah. Because a sinless one is here. What did we sing earlier on? That's a lovely hymn, isn't it? It's so simple but it's so profound there is a green hill far away.

There was none other good enough to pay the price of sin. Only the sinless one could do it, couldn't he? He was without sin.

[37 : 09] That when Jesus Christ came down to this earth he rejected temptation out of every hand. He was tempted with every temptation we're told. And he rejected it.

He rebuffed it. In extreme pressure. When we would have cracked. You see, when we give in to temptation we're tempted a little bit and then we give in.

And then the pressure's over. But when our Lord, when he holds out and holds out and holds out and holds out what happens? There's immense pressure.

I know that Whitby, you hold beach missions. And you've ever seen the tug of war on the beach? And what happens, I've seen many tugs of war and I've seen the rope go thinner and thinner and thinner and then see it snap actually.

It's not a pleasant sight seeing a load of rugby players going everywhere. Big burly dads, isn't it? But it's under this enormous pressure and you know what's going to happen? And our Lord is under this enormous strain, under this enormous pressure.

[38 : 13] Yet did he crack? He held out and is our glorious saviour. Jonah was the sinfer like the rest of us.

But Jesus is sinless. He's sinless. What else? Well yes, they were both prophets, they were both God's spokesmen, but Christ is so much more than a prophet.

I speak to many Muslims about the Lord Jesus Christ and they say, oh yeah, yeah you're Christian, we're Muslim, yeah, we have lots in common about Jesus, don't we? We do.

But they say, well he's a prophet and he is, but he's so much more than a prophet, isn't he? He's God. And so Jesus Christ is so much greater than Jonah because of his person.

He is divine. He is God, is Jesus Christ. But Jonah is not. Think about it in another way. Jonah was just a preacher but Jesus is a saviour.

[39 : 18] What is the best that Jonah could do? He could tell people about God, couldn't he? Which he did. He could pray, which I'm sure he did and he did in Jonah chapter 2.

What's the best thing a preacher can do? Well they can pray and they can preach but they can't save. No preacher can save except our Lord who was a preacher and a saviour.

Jonah is unable to save. Any prophet that's ever lived is unable to save. Any preacher under the new covenant is unable to save.

But Jesus Christ is greater than Jonah because Jesus Christ saves sinners. sinners. And he's saved and he continues to save and will continue to save until the last sheep is gathered into the fold and then he'll come again and there'll be a new heavens and there'll be a new earth for the former things have passed away.

How glorious it will be. What a wonderful saviour we have.

[40 : 26] And Jonah's the anti-type. You could just point the way. This type. And he was actually himself a type to the Ninevites. Did you know that? If you read Luke's account it says that Jonah was actually a type to the Ninevites.

He himself was a type. Can you imagine this man stinking from being in a fish rolling up into this great city of Nineveh after being there for three days and three nights? Do you not think that he said one word about what had happened to him?

He must have told them about what happened and so therefore he told them about the severity of God and the goodness of God. The judgment of God and the provision of God.

He was a type himself to the Ninevites Jesus tells us. He himself was a type. But he couldn't save. But Jesus is the one who he points forward to.

He can save. He does save by what he did by dying and rising again. He rose again as a saviour of sinners.

[41 : 36] The Lord Jesus Christ. Don't look to any preacher this evening. Where's your gaze? Where's your faith?

Is your faith in a man and whatever he says almost as if it's got a monopoly on truth? I tell you what if you don't know sooner or later preachers have lots of faults you know.

Every pastor has faults you know. And in fact the closer you get to someone the more you see their faults. Isn't that right spouses? Don't put your faith in any preacher.

Don't trust in any preacher. Don't have over bloated views of preachers. They're not going to save you. In fact only believe what they say when you can back it up from the Bible.

But Jesus Christ does save. And he's the only one who can save. And there's no other name under heaven given amongst men by which we must be saved.

[42 : 36] Jonah couldn't save but Jesus Christ saves. What else? Well in their manhood they're different.

Jonah was a man and Jesus Christ is a man. He's still a man today. And when we go to glory he'll still be a man then. That's what the Bible tells us. He's still a man. He's still the God man even in glory.

And he'll be a God man for all eternity. Did you know that? Do you know what Rabbi Duncan said? Primeval dust is at the right hand of God the Father. He's right. The God man.

But in his humanity Jonah failed. But in Christ's humanity Christ succeeds. He's the epitome of manhood. Isn't he? He's the epitome of humanity is our Lord Jesus Christ.

The God man. And in that manhood he exemplifies this Christ. The true ideal of what it is to be human.

[43 : 44] But Jonah failed. And where Jonah failed the Lord Jesus Christ succeeded. Jesus is better in his preaching.

Now you see what is the best any prophet or preacher can do? They can say thus says the Lord. What does Jesus Christ do when he preaches?

What does Jesus Christ say? I say to you. Why didn't he say thus says the Lord? Lord? Because he is the Lord. He has the highest authority in his preaching.

He didn't preach like the scribes and the Pharisees, did he? He preached with authority. You see a prophet could say thus says the Lord and that was powerful but they were just a medium. They were just a conduit if you know what that means.

They were a pipe pipeline from God, an instrument but who's Christ? He is God himself in his preaching which is why Christ can say come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.

[44 : 52] Jonah couldn't do that. The best he could do is say go to God but Christ could say come to me, believe in me, trust in me and out of your heart will flow rivers of living water.

how much of a difference there is between Jonah and Jesus and here's another one, his power, his person is better, preaching is better, his power is better.

Jonah couldn't take away sins but Christ can. You remember when there was this packed out room and our Lord is preaching in Capernaum and there's a man with a stretcher who's been paralytic and he has four friends to look after him and they couldn't get in because it was crowded outside and so what did they do?

Did they go home and given up for a bad job? Went up on the roof, flat roof, on the stairs, opened the tiles, lowered him down in front of Jesus, can you think of it?

And all eyes are on Jesus. Now what would you think his greatest need would be? His greatest need would be to be healed. You'd be forgiven to think what Jesus is going to say any moment be healed.

[46 : 13] Was that what happened? What did Jesus say? Your sins have forgiven you. There's murmuring, there's complaining, there's grumbling, a bit like Jonah really.

Who can forgive sins without God alone? Well they're right, in one sense only God can forgive sins. But they didn't think about the fact that Jesus is actually God. And so he says, so that you may know, Mark 2 10, that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.

He said to this paralytic, I say to you arise and go to your home. Christ has power to forgive sins because he knew that in a very short space of time he would go to the cross, he would die for sinners and rise again, and save.

Can I ask you a question this evening? Are your sins forgiven? Have you ever been to Calvary and known the power that no Jonah, that no preacher can give you but only Jesus Christ can?

Have you known what it is to confess your sin and to cry on the mercy of God and to say, God be merciful to me the sinner and to come to him and say I don't deserve anything of your favor, I don't deserve anything of your mercy, I don't deserve anything of you, in fact all the best we deserve is eternity separated from God, isn't it?

[47 : 45] God be and you too will go like that man that day who prayed that prayer, God be merciful to me a sinner, you can go to your house being justified right with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, did you know that the word he uses for mercy there is not the normal word for mercy in the original, it's the word for a mediator, when he cried out God be merciful to me a sinner, he said God I need a mediator, I need a go between, I need somebody as a representative, it's not just blanket vague mercy I need, I need someone to take my place, it's what he was crying on the cross, for the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, he needed a mediator, he needed what Jesus did on the cross to save him, and that's what you and I need, the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, will you come to him, will you accept him, will you believe in him, will you trust in him, will you confess your sins to him, and say Lord

I don't deserve anything from you but Jesus died for sinners and welcomed sinners and I come to you and I know that when I come I won't be cast out but I'll have mercy given and my sins will be forgiven and I'll have a home in heaven when I die because of the blood of Jesus and his resurrection, is there not one person here this evening that would cry that out this evening to God and say God forgive me and come into my heart the risen Lord and reign and boss my life, oh that every one of us would and every one of us would be trusting in what Jesus Christ did all that years, all those years ago on the cross, he died that we might be forgiven, he died to make us good, that we might go to heaven saved by his precious blood, that's our message isn't it, that's the gospel, that's what we think about at Easter and that's the glories and the wonder of our Lord

Jesus Christ who indeed are greater than Jonah is here, will you love him and adore him, that person who went to the cross for sinners and who trusted in him, we have to say hallelujah, what a saviour, what a gospel isn't it, never get over the gospel of Christ, never get over the fact that out of love for hell deserving sinners, he left heaven's gaze of angels to all the way to the cross for the likes of us, it is a great gospel and it can be your gospel if you trust in Christ this evening, a greater than Jonah is here.

We conclude with our final hymn, it's number 125, number 125, from heaven's eternal throne there came a word of strong decree, light up the world with grace and truth and set the captives free and then verse 5, born to a cross by cruel hands of men in darkness held, judgment and death eclipsed the sun whilst lies deceive the world out from the tomb of dark despair, the prince of life arose, the truth prevails and grace abounds in all the world it flows.

Number 125, we stand to sing. let's close in prayer.

[51 : 33] our heavenly father, we cannot thank you enough for the great sacrifice that Jesus Christ made on that cross and by bursting the gates of death dies no more.

Our father receive our thanks and our praise and our worship for your son ever coming into this world and living the life we should have lived and dying the death we should have died and rising again triumphantly.

Oh father we pray that every one of us here tonight would be trusting in the Lord Jesus through what he did on the cross. Oh father we pray that every one of us would come running to that sin stained saviour and be covered in that precious blood and have their sins washed clean.

Oh bless your word to our hearts we pray this evening and dismiss us we pray with the blessing of yourself your son and your spirit. Amen. Amen. Amen.