

“God The Son: His Identity”

Speaker: Rev. Alan Foster

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Father, we are thankful in every way for who you are to us in Christ. You are our guardian, our guide, our faithful redeemer. You are the one who holds all things in his hands, good and bad, hard, easy, welcoming and fearful. Father, you are the one through Christ who has made our relationship with you possible. We call you our Father because of him. So this morning as we begin to look at who Jesus is, his attributes, his nature, Father, I pray that you would speak to us each of us this morning in a unique way. Each of us come this morning with unique needs. We come from different weeks, different backgrounds, different ways to view life, different values, different struggles, and yet your word speaks to all of us. And so Father, I pray this morning that you will, through your scriptures, that you'll speak to each of us the exact words, the exact truths that we need this morning. We commit our time to you in Jesus' name, amen.

Now Steve being out, he didn't get any notes sent out, you have to hang on. I'll be working off my notes and when Steve gets back, maybe he can post them and you'll have them after the fact. So let me start off with one quote here. We are Presbyterian, so a quote from John Calvin is always appropriate. This John Calvin said in his theology, he said,

our situation would surely have been hopeless, had the very majesty of God not descended to us, since it was not in our power to ascend to him.

The main thing that differentiates Christianity from all other world religions is the fact that God came down to us. In every other world religion, we have to work hard to figure out how to get to God. You've got to keep a bunch of rules, you've got to sacrifice, in tribal religions you have to appease the gods, in Islam you've got to pray five times towards Mecca. There's all kinds of things that we have to do to reach up to God. But in Christianity, through Christ, God knows that we don't have it in and of ourselves to find him, to reach him. We would never try. And so he sent his son down to us, God in the flesh.

We're going to look at several aspects, or several topics this morning. We'll start off with sort of the theological foundations of who Jesus is.

I've got a paragraph that's in your notes when you get them, but I want to read it, but read it slowly so you can get your arms around this. This will be our foundation, and then we'll springboard from this into other aspects of who Jesus is, one in particular. Listen while I read this slowly.

Jesus is one person with two natures.

One person, but in that one person, there are two distinct natures. Now, his personhood is not divided, so he's not a confused person. And his natures, the two natures within Jesus, are not mixed. He is of the same substance as the Father, according to his divinity. He is also of the same substance as us, flesh, blood, according to his humanity.

So in the one person of Jesus Christ, we have the union of humanity and divinity in such a way that he is fully a single person with neither human nature nor divine nature lessened or changed or confused or mixed up together.

Now, get your arms around that. What do you think of when you think of this person who was not two people, he was one person? If we were alive during Jesus' times, we could have walked with him, seen him, touched him. John says that in his first letter that *we have seen him with our eyes*. And yet he was God. How does that strike you?

Curious.

Some more words, Kurt. What is curious? What about this fully God, fully man is curious?

It doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

Right. It doesn't really make sense. There's never been anything like it. There will never be anything like it. What else?

You remember in the movie Aladdin when the genie says, and I can't remember exactly, infinite power, tiny little living space, something like that. And I think that that infinite power of God confined to just a human body, a little living space, in comparison on the God side.

In infinite power, in a tiny little space, and yet if you were to have talked to Jesus, you would have never felt that he was frustrated being in this tiny space. He was certainly never limited. I mean, he walked on water. He made water turn into wine. He took a child's lunch and fed over 5,000 people. He was never limited. But certainly, there was all of God inside a person. What else?

Paradoxical.

Paradoxical. Okay.

Man, at the same time, like, yeah.

Does paradoxical mean false? No. There are paradoxes. Now, when I was a kid, I thought that meant two dachshunds, two dogs, paradox. Anyway, there are paradoxes that are in nature and that we see them around that are hard to understand. They seem to be contradictory, but they're not. This is one, absolutely, this, a fully God, in a person, that seems to be paradoxical, and it is, but it's true. What else? Chuck? Yeah.

That union is only possible in the incarnation. That's the only way to make that happen, that he could be fully God, fully man, through the incarnation.

Alright, think about this. I love it. The incarnation. Mary's pregnant, no room in the inn, delivers a baby as we have come to think of in a cattle stall of some sort, lay him in a manger of stone, probably a limestone trough that they had, they had cut out or sanded out a space for the animals to drink water. She laid him there, probably some hay on top of it. So two hours prior to that birth, where was Jesus? That's an easy one. Come on. In her womb. All right. Let's go backwards. Two hours prior to conception, where was Jesus? At the right hand of the father. When those angels came down to that hillside, it wasn't long before that they were in Jesus' presence. You know? In this baby, laying in this feeding trough, was God, the God of everything, that created everything. And yet he cried, he had, I don't guess they had pampers, but they had whatever they had. You know, he pooped, he cried, he slept, he may not have slept well. Our daughter. She's just given us our second grandchild, and man, she just hasn't slept well. She's just now, she's five months, and she's just now sleeping through the night. Who knows what Jesus did, you know? Joseph, it's your turn, you know?

Because of the carol, no crying he makes,

yeah right, yes.

Along those lines I was thinking about, he was fully human, so he had human needs, but he was uncorrupted by sin. So he had human needs without sin, which is not something that we can even fathom.

Right, yeah, that's the big difference.

Now, Jesus was fully human in every way, so every aspect of who we are, he was able to redeem. Let me phrase it like this, remaining what he was, he came down and became what he was not, all out of love for the purpose of saving his people from their sins.

Now, let me ask you this, what if Jesus was not fully human? What's the implications of Jesus being God, in the flesh somehow, but not truly being fully human? What's the implications? Back there, yes, sir.

No true representation of man in order to..

He could not be our representative, absolutely.

...to die for the elect.

Good, yes, he could not represent us, what else? What's another implication of the fact, or if Jesus was not fully human?

Well the word says that he sympathizes with our weaknesses, and he could not have done so if he had not experienced it.

Yes, he was without sin, but he was tempted in every way. He can sympathize with our weaknesses, both our spiritual weaknesses like temptation, but also our physical weaknesses. He got tired, he got sick, he got hungry, he had all of those weaknesses that we experienced. What else? What else? What's another implication of the fact, or if Jesus was not fully human?
Lisa.

He could not be our propitiator.

He could not, all right, tell the class what the word propitiator means.

I believe it means substitute for sin.

Perfect, he could not be our substitute. If there's anything that differentiates Christianity from any other world religion, it's God coming to us in order to be our substitute, to stand in our place, all right?

Now what if Jesus was not fully God? What's the implications there? And there's just as many. You can either say it or you can say it, but maybe not. Yeah, now tell me why, Kurt. Tell me why.

Well, there are a whole lot of people in insane asylums claiming to be God. And there are a whole lot of billionaires and politicians claiming to have all the power.

Who act like they have all the power. What else? What if Jesus was not fully God? The same thing.

The other side of the coin, he couldn't die for us as God. He couldn't fulfill the law and the commandments.

Perfect, he could not be sinless. He couldn't fulfill the law. It's just as important for our relationship with God, for Jesus to have died for our sins as well as for him to have lived a perfect life. If he only died for our sins and took our sins away, the implication of that is that now once

we're saved, we have to work real hard to produce some sort of righteousness to appease God. So it's just as important for him to have lived that perfect life as our substitute. He lived a perfect life for us. He fulfilled the law and God's righteous commands so that we can stand before God whole, fully, complete, lacking nothing. What else? One more. Here. Yes.

I think just at a very elementary level, he would not have been able to have known the hearts of those with whom he walked if he had not been God.

It was not. Yeah. He couldn't have known us. And maybe the last one for me is that he could not reveal God to us. He came from the Father and one of his main tasks in coming to us from the Father was to show us what God is like and who he is.

I'm going to just rattle off a bunch of scripture passages here. Well, in fact, do you all have a Bible? You all bring Bibles, don't you? You should bring a Bible. Either one of these or at least on your phone. I mean, this is church, you know, so you should bring a Bible. So look up John 1:14. I'm going to read a few others while you're looking it up. These are passages that talk about what it means for Jesus to reveal the Father.

Colossians 1:15, Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

Hebrews 1:3, he's the exact representation of God's being.

Colossians 2:9, in Jesus, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily in a body.

In Jesus, we have a high or great high priest who, as it says in Hebrews 4:15, who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin.

And then John 1:1, Jesus is the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

Now look at John 1:14. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

I don't think the disciples, it was like, I don't think it was until Pentecost until the Holy Spirit indwelt them. And it's almost like their spiritual eyes went ding and they saw everything, because the Spirit revealed who Jesus was to them. But it says here, John, the word became flesh, the word became flesh, dwelt, lived among us. That word dwelt is the same word as tabernacle in the Old Testament. The tabernacle was God's dwelling place among his people. So God through and in the person of Christ came and tabernacled among us. He dwelt. He lived. We were his home as it were. We have seen his glory, the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth. Let me give you a quote here from this book that we're working through. Michael Reeves says,

when the triune God gives us his Word, capital W, Jesus, he gives us his very self, for the Son is the Word of God, the perfect revelation of the Father.

And then what did Jesus tell Philip? Right there in the upper room, you know, these disciples, they know something big is happening. They just have this ominous feeling like something's about to happen, you know. And Philip says, Jesus, if you'll just show us the Father, what did Jesus say? *You've seen the Father. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father.*

John 5:19. So Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

Can you imagine what if Jesus is probably 31, 2, 3, something like that, best we can tell. What if you talk to a 32, 33-year-old man, my son, my buddy is 32, and what if this 32-year-old man said to you, you know, I just really can't do anything unless I talk to my Father. And you say, like anything? And he said, yeah, really anything. I just can't do anything unless I hear from my Father, unless I've seen him. Well, you would sort of think, you know, aren't you a little bit old for that? I mean, you can make some decisions and you're a man, be a man, you know. Take a step out. Live by faith. Come on. Take a risk.

Jesus said, he was that connected to his Father that he said, I don't do anything, I don't do anything. What its say here? Put my glasses back on. The Son can do a few things? The Son can do nothing of his own accord but only what he sees the Father doing. That's how much he came to reveal the Father. Everything the Father does, thinks, carries out, carries out through the Son. So when you see the Son, you see the Father.

Now that really kind of leads to this next part of my notes here. What was the purpose of Jesus coming, or the purpose of Jesus being fully God and fully man?

The purpose and maybe the only purpose of Jesus becoming a man and taking on humanity was so that he could come, redeem us, save us, die for our sins, live the perfect life and die a sacrificial death.

A couple of weeks back when I taught on the nature of God, I made this central truth. As I said, the central truth about the identity of God the Father is God is not your boss. He's your Father.

Now I will couple that with this. The central truth about the identity of God the Son is this, Jesus is not your judge. He's your lover. Now that's fairly intimate. If that word makes you feel a little uncomfortable, say you can use the word friend, that's good. Jesus is not your judge. He's your friend. John 3:17, which right after, come right up to John 3:16, obviously.

He just said in *John 3:16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

And *John 3:17, he says, for God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*

Brenda, do you know if you were the only person on earth? Jesus would still have come. For you, for you. Tim, for you, Tim, for you, Brian, for you, if we had been the only people on earth, he would still come because he came for us. He came to rescue us, save us. We had a broken down vehicle, and he stopped and saved us. That's a pretty light way, I should come up with a better example. We were hanging by a thread over the pit of hell, and God came and rescued us.

Jesus looks at us with the same joy and longing and delight and excitement that a groom has when he sees his bride coming down the aisle.

I read a story of a pastor friend of mine. He was doing a wedding, and the wedding party had come up. The bridesmaids on one side, the groomsmen on the other, and the groom is standing behind him or beside him here, and he's standing here with his, ready to start the ceremony, and they play whatever the song is. Then down the aisle comes the bride on the arm of her father. Without thinking, the groom started walking down the aisle toward her, and this pastor friend of mine had to grab him and pull him back like, you'll have your time later, but you stay here right now. He was so excited that he was running toward his beautiful bride. That's what your savior thinks about you.

How did Paul phrase it in Ephesians, he talks about marriage, but he can't help but bring that analogy back to Christ in the church. *Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church, yada yada. Same way husbands should love their wives, as Christ loves them, and no one, no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, because therefore, what does he say, oh, so that he can present her, there it is, verse 27, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.*

That's what Jesus is up to as it were, taking us as his bride and making us ready for heaven so that we might be presented to him on that last day, what's it saying, holy without spot or wrinkle or blemish. No wrinkles, you know, no spots, no blemishes, nothing, it's pure and perfect is what Jesus is moving toward here. You have a question over here.

I understand the nature, two different natures, but when Christ was on the cross and he said, he was in me, he was in the human nature, but yet he was God and he knew already what was going to happen, so was it just his humanness that was speaking at that point?

Well, it's a great question. I don't know the answer. There it seems were times when Jesus worked out of his God, his divinity, because a human can't turn water into wine, can't walk on water. There were times when he worked out of his humanity. He even said, I don't know what the future looks like. The disciples said, when will that time come when you come to deliver Israel? I don't know the time or the hour. So Jesus said, I don't know the time. Only the Father knows that, and I guess the Father hadn't told Jesus yet. Now, how does that work? I don't know. I don't think we're told. I don't think we know.

So yes, did the Father forsake the Son? Yeah, yeah, I don't know. I don't know. God can't be connected to sin, and yet at that point in time, all of the sins for all of eternity past and all of eternity future of God's people were placed on him just like that scapegoat. If you remember the scapegoat in the Old Testament, the priest laid his hands on the goat and sent it outside the camp to go die. All of the sins of God's people from past and the future were laid on Jesus, and God can't associate with sin. Is that what happened? There was a forsaking? I don't know. Maybe. Maybe. That's again, that's as much of a mystery to me as how there can even be two natures in one person. But a great question. I just don't think we, I don't think we know. And I don't think, let's not let what we don't know cloud us from what we do know. You know. Yeah, go ahead.

Just thinking about that, that whole dynamic, the word says that Jesus became sin for us and that the full wrath of God was poured out on him. So I can't imagine what kind of pain, even as God, what kind of pain would it be to experience the wrath that we deserved?

Absolutely. Never have an experienced any separation from his father. And then it doesn't say he sinned, he didn't sin, but he, well put, he became sin. God viewed him as sinful, even though he wasn't. Lisa?

I just can't help but think of the verse that talks about him being a sympathizer of our, you know, with our weaknesses. Could that not be why he came in his humanity to, to help us to sympathize with how we feel? And it is a mystery and we don't know, but I just can't help but think that might be the possibility?

Reeves makes a great point here. He says,

the father sent the son so that the love the father eternally had for the son. So the love they had for each other, but the son, the love the father had for the son from all of eternity might be in those us who believe in him so that we might enjoy the son the same way the father always has.

Is that good? The father so delights in his eternal love for the son that he desires to share it with all who will believe. His love for us is the overflow of his almighty love for his son.

He loves us because he loves his son.

That great phrase that Paul uses all the time, he says we are in Christ or in him. Paul says it over and over and over and over and over again in multiple letters. He says we are in Christ and so because we are in Christ, God loves us through his love for his own son. If we were ever separated from the son, we would not have the love of the father.

Now one thing that I thought about, if we focus, if we make the love of Christ for us central, how then do we explain God's righteousness through Christ, his Christ being a judge.

You look at Revelation, and my goodness, you read Revelation and you get a picture of Jesus with sword in his hand and he's riding on a white horse and you get fires coming out of his eyes and lightning out of his fingernails. You get this picture of this powerful. Well, how many of y'all have been to some aspect of nature that has just captivated you? Whether you've been to Yosemite or Yellowstone or the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls or even sitting atop Clingman's Dome and looking at the Appalachians just layering out in front of you, you feel drawn to that beauty. We went to Yosemite with the kids 10, 15 years ago and of course the kids were much younger then and we were on top of Glacier Point, which you can sit up there and you can just see the valley and El Capitan down here, and I could have sat up there for two hours in the quiet, just kind of drinking, of course the kids were ready to go after about three and a half minutes, you know, but you just drink in that majesty. You're drawn to that powerful beauty. That's how we are drawn to the beauty and the love of Christ. It's a powerful love as it were. Reeves also says,

the love that we experience from God is shared with us by the Son out of the abundance of love that they have for each other.

I have to go back to John 17. We have to almost end there this morning. If you've got your Bibles, look at John 17. Again upper room, pretty much the last things that Jesus is saying to his disciples before he goes to the garden and to the cross and of course 17, the whole chapter is nothing but Jesus praying to the Father but in the presence of these disciples. You could just scan your way through the whole chapter and see some amazing things about the relationship between the Father and the Son.

Verse 6, I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were and you gave them to me.

He goes on verse 11, *I'm no longer in the world but they are in the world. I'm coming to you Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given me that they may be one even as we are one.*

Look at verse 20, verse 20 says, *I do not ask for these only but also for those who will believe in me through their word*, that's us throughout the ages. We have received the knowledge of God through the extension from the disciples. *That they may all be one*, it's amazing how unity was such a precious thing for Jesus. *Just as you Father are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us*, almost sound like Dr. Seuss doesn't it, I in you and they in me and we in each other. *I in you that they may be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me*. So that the world may believe that you've sent me. One of the ways we evangelize is through unity with each other and through understanding God's love for us. *The glory that you've given me, I have given to them that they may be one even as we are one*. Verse 23, *and you in me that they may be perfectly one so that the world may know that you sent me twice*, he said that and loved them even as you loved me.

Let me bring this to a close here. What does all this mean for us and mind you, I could have written 8, 10, 15 pages on who Jesus is and his love for us. The Puritan, Pastor Thomas Goodwin says this and the Reeves book quotes it, he says

the truth is he is more glad of us than we can be of him. Oh therefore come in unto him. If you knew his heart you would.

The reason we don't come to Jesus as much as we should, the reason we don't relish and revel in his love is because we're not convinced of his love for us. If you knew his heart you would.

2 Corinthians 3:18 And we all with unveiled face, When Moses saw God on the mountain had to come down with a veil over his face. He was too full of the presence of God, it would be too bright. But we now can come to God through Christ with an unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord. We view Jesus when we come to Jesus, we behold the glory of the Lord. We are being transformed into the same image, the image of Christ from one degree of glory to another.

Our task as believers is to behold Jesus, to come to him, yes to come to him for provision and for help and for wisdom and for the love that we need to care for others and the forgiveness that we need to forgive others. We come to God for or to Christ for those kinds of things but we behold him. We just, we become captivated by his beauty like sitting there on that mountaintop and just drinking it in. Basically, we need to more and more allow the love that Jesus has for us to captivate our hearts.

So what is the end of the story? What does Revelation tell us? It tells us that Jesus is the great bridegroom. Revelation 19 speaks of *the marriage supper of the Lamb*. The marriage supper of the Lamb will take place Jesus as the great groom comes for his bride. We are his bride. He takes us to himself. The marriage supper takes place and then what happens after the marriage supper at every, at a wedding, when you have had that wedding dinner, what happens after that? Well Jesus as the groom will take us his bride and it says in *Revelation 21:3, and he will dwell with them*. They go and have a house together, right? That's what happens when you get married. You go live together. *He will dwell with them (Revelation 21) and we will be his people* and we will live happily ever after. That's the end of the story.

The great love of the Father has been packaged in that baby in the manger who came for his people, and the groom then welcomes us, his bride, into the home that he has prepared for them. Let's pray.

Oh my goodness Father, why don't we, why don't we resist your love at times? Certainly why don't we welcome it? Why don't we recognize it? Why don't we view you the way a groom views his bride, the way the bride is welcomed by that loving groom. Father help us more and more to be captivated by the beauty of your son as we behold him and are transformed into his image from one degree of glory to another and even more than that Father help us to be captivated not just by who he is in his love for us or in his beauty, but in his love for us. I just don't think we believe how much he loves us. Help us Father. In Jesus' name, amen.