

Jesus is Mighty God

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[0 : 00] You'll notice in that passage that we read earlier, there's these famous verses that came right in the middle, in verse 6. And it says there's kind of four titles. It talks about a child being born.

We'll have four titles. We saw that he was a wonderful counselor last week. This week we're going to see that Jesus is mighty God. And we're looking at times in his life where he displayed mighty counselor last week, wonderful counselor last week, mighty God this week.

So John 11, 1078. We're going to read from 17 to 44 just when we get there. I'm going to pray for us first and ask for God's help as we look at this part of the Bible together.

Almighty God, we just come to you and we thank you again for your word, the Bible, that you want to speak to us. We pray for our hearts now.

We pray that you'd give us ears to hear what you want to say to us. You know our lives. You know where we've come from. You know what we've experienced. You know the ups and the downs.

[1 : 03] You know it all back to front. You know us better than ourselves. So we pray that you'd, I pray that by the power of your Holy Spirit, you'd speak to each one of us and encourage us and build us up and teach us about you and teach us about ourselves.

We ask for this in the name of Christ. Amen. Amen. Before we get into the passage, I'm just going to spend a few minutes just unpacking kind of what we're doing here.

as I say, today we're looking at how Jesus in his earthly life demonstrates that he's the mighty God. He's the mighty God. But before we get to that, I just want to unpack that title, mighty God.

In the Old Testament, apart from this one place in Isaiah 9-6, where it refers to a child, the term mighty God is always used of God. It's never used as a person, apart from this one place.

So it's clear that this child will be called mighty God. It's the same identity as the God of the Bible. This is written, that verse, that book that Isaiah's written hundreds of years before Jesus arrives as a baby.

[2 : 16] It's kind of what we call prophetic prophecy. It's pointing forward to it. So in other words, the child is the same as the living God. It points forward to when God will come down as a child, taking on a human body and nature.

This morning we're going to see his displays, his mighty power, but simultaneously showing that his mighty God shows that he's fully human. And we're going to see that as we see Jesus meet two sisters who were grieving the death of their brother.

That's the story. Now, it's a raw story. It's emotional. Because as any of us know who've experienced grief, the loss of a family member is whatever generation, whether it's 2,000 years ago, whether it's today, losing a family member is emotionally raw.

Or, you know, in Western society we do everything, don't we, to keep talking about those kind of things, about grief and death. We keep it at arm's length. We don't think about it.

Don't talk about it. Avoid it. But actually what we see here, and we know this is true in our own hearts, that having those thoughts about that, it kind of brings what we really believe to the surface.

[3 : 30] When we face the reality of, you know, death here in this passage, it exposes what's going on in our hearts. Because when faced with grief, the reality of living in a world affected by sin and suffering and death, it's kind of the place where our true selves, our true beliefs are really laid bare.

When we meet these two sisters, Mary and Martha, we see what they actually believe about Jesus. It's not what they say, not what they say, but functionally how it comes out in how you live.

You know, you can say a lot of things, but actually the proof is in what comes out. And what we see is that they believe that his mighty power is limited.

Because he doesn't do what they expect, and he doesn't do what they want. We're just like them.

When faced with difficulties, when faced with grief and hardships, our true beliefs come to the

service.

We want Jesus to do what we think he should be doing, and our belief kind of is the same that we might say that he's the mighty God, but we can often live with a limited, truncated view of his mighty power.

[4 : 43] The Jesus that we meet today, in today's passage, I want you to know that this is the same Jesus that is here by his spirit. It's the same Jesus that offers a relationship with him today.

Not a different Jesus, but the same person. And he is as mighty today as he is in this Bible passage. Mighty power not limited to a historical event, but as powerful, as active, and as available. There is opportunity today as we hear from the living God in his word, to maybe ask ourselves this question. What if the mighty power of Jesus Christ, what if we could reframe it in both what we believe and say, and how we live?

What if we could live like this? What if we could live with an assured belief that the power of almighty God is not like an extinct volcano, once upon a time erupted but relegated to a history book.

But his mighty power is active, and is accessible, and can work for you, and through you, and is available in your life. If we had that assured belief that we could face, I think it would change how the way we face anything.

[6 : 03] That the greatest fear that we have, we could face it with peace, knowing that we know the one who holds the keys. Let's move to John 11, and see our expectations blown out of the water with the power of mighty Jesus.

John 11, page 1078, from verse 17, this is God's word. On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

Lord, Martha said to Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, God will give you whatever you ask.

Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again. Martha answered, I know he will rise again, in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

[7 : 20] The one who believes in me will live, even though they die, and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this? Yes, Lord, she replied.

I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world. After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. The teacher's here, she said, and he's asking for you.

When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews, who had been with Mary in the house comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

[8 : 28] Where have you laid him? He asked. Come and see, Lord, they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, see how he loved him?

But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying? Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

Take away the stone, he said. But Lord, said Martha, the sister of the dead man, by this time there's a bad order, for he's been there for four days. Then Jesus said, did I not tell you that if you believe, you'll see the glory of God?

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out. The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth round his face.

[9 : 39] Jesus said to them, take off the grave clothes and let him go. The first thing we hit in the passage is a problem.

Mary and Martha's misunderstanding of Jesus' identity and a misunderstanding of his power. He doesn't meet their expectations.

Both sisters, if you notice, they say the same thing when they speak to him. Verse 21 and verse 32. See, verse 21 first.

Then Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. It sounds like they're blaming him, doesn't it?

Their point, you know, Lazarus, our brother who we loved, who you loved, he'd still be alive and kicking. If you'd have just got here sooner, where have you been?

[10 : 42] Where on earth have you been? And we notice, there is definitely some belief, but it only goes so far. We know that there is the belief that Jesus has the power to heal because they believe if he'd got there sooner, he would still be alive.

That they believe that he has the power to heal, to restore, to prevent death, but that's where it ends. And also, we know that they think that his power is dependent on location.

That if he'd have got there sooner, then everything would have been okay. They limit his power to where he's been. Jesus speaks to Martha, your brother will rise again.

Martha thinks he's talking about his brother's future resurrection. Verse 24, I know he'll rise then, in the last days. You see, who Martha thinks Jesus is shapes what she expects of him.

That is true of us. Who we think Jesus is will shape what we expect of him. And so the question we must all face that Martha is really thinking through is, this Jesus bloke, who is he?

[11 : 55] And it hits us at Christmas, doesn't it? You know, Christmas, the Christ of Christmas, who do we say, who do you say, who do I say, that the baby born in a manger, in a feeding trough, is?

And it doesn't matter whether you've been following Jesus for a long time, or whether you're thinking it through, that question is not less important.

It's always the question, who do you believe Jesus is? How you answer that will impact what you think he's possible of. Do we place limits on Jesus? Maybe in our own life, do we believe that Jesus' power is for today, or for a history lesson?

Here's a history lesson. The 6th and the 9th of August, 1945. The biggest human display of mighty power, in my mind, happened.

The United States detonate two nuclear bombs over two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing up to a quarter of a million people. The power generated, catastrophic, devastating, and hopefully never used again.

[13 : 08] The source of nuclear power created by scientists. Before those bombs went off, well, I don't know, but nuclear meant very little to anybody.

You say nuclear now, everyone's terrified, because they have a knowledge of what nuclear is. You see, once we've got a knowledge of something, we understand what it can do.

Knowledge of Jesus is key in understanding the mighty power that he harnesses. Which is where we move to our second point.

Jesus breaks in, and he tells Martha who he is. He says, verse 25, look with me, famous verses, Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

All life, he's saying, all life is found in me. Physical life, your emotion life, spiritual life, the life to come that Martha believes in for her brother, and the life she has right there, its source is the man in front of her.

[14 : 23] But notice what he says, to take hold of it, there's one thing that is needed. Three times you get that word in the verse, belief. The one who believes in me will live even though they die, and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

Do you believe this? Do you believe this? Do you believe I'm the source of all life? And we see the logic in what he says, what that means for anyone who does believe in him.

See the logic? Jesus is saying, if you believe in me, if you believe that I'm the source of life, he says, when you die, when you're buried six foot under, you will continue to live spiritually.

He's talking about life after death. You die physically, but you live with life after death. And then you see what he says, verse 26, but he says, whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

He's saying, if you have spiritual life, because you believe spiritually, you will continue on into eternity, do you believe this? Do you, Martha, who I love, believe this?

[15 : 34] That I am the source of your life, now and the source of your life forever? Do you believe that I'm the living God, the mighty God of the Old Testament? Do you believe I'm the fulfillment of these verses?

Isaiah 9, verse 6, wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, the prince of peace?

Because the claim, I am the resurrection and the life, is a claim of divinity.

He's saying, I'm God in the flesh, I'm the mighty God of the Old Testament. If you believe Martha, if you believe Martha, yes, physically you will die, but if you believe, you've already been raised.

You already have new life and when spiritual life, when new life begins, no one truly, who has ever had that experience, ever truly dies, but they keep on living. Do you believe this is true?

Do you believe who I am and what I'm promising you? That question, that question is as pertinent now as it was to this woman.

[16 : 44] Do we believe this? That Jesus is the almighty God, the origin of all life, that his identity? Now, if I tell you that God is the resurrection, you might picture this distant, stoic power, but this is where the Christ of Christmas shocks us because the mighty God doesn't just hold the power of life, what we're going to see is that he feels the pain of having been brought into a world full of suffering and sin.

He feels the pain of death. You might expect a mighty God to be distant and cold, but the resurrection and the life comes with tears on his face. That's where we're going to go next.

Jesus' power in becoming human. The source of all life takes on a human nature and when he does that, his existence takes on a whole new sphere.

The mighty God experiences human life, it's all its mess and dirt. The great mighty God, the I Am, allows himself, he chooses to experience the full range of human emotions, the full range of human sufferings, the full range of human relationships and we catch a glimpse when Mary drops at his feet.

Verse 32, she says the same as her sister, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. He reacts very differently. And I kind of want to unpack this slowly to really dig deeper in understanding the complexity of Jesus, the fully God, fully man.

[18 : 27] there's three demonstrations of Jesus' power and might I just want us to hone in on. The first one, the first demonstration of his power is his free will.

It's the first thing we're going to say. Look with me, verse 33, look what we read. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

Where have you laid in me, he asked. Come and see, Lord, they replied. Jesus wept. When everyone else, including us, goes through grief, we all, and we all will at some point, we are victims. Grief happens to us. It overwhelms us. We can't simply switch it off. It is there, hanging. But you see, Jesus is different. He has free will and volition.

He's not a victim of grief. Remember, he is fully God as well as fully man. He's in control, as mighty God, over his own, even over his own mindset.

[19 : 39] He's not overwhelmed. You might even say he has authority and is in charge of his own psychology, his own well-being, which means that he makes in the choice in this moment to open the floodgates of his heart.

He could resist. He could resist. But he voluntarily summons and subjects himself to the devastating emotion of grief, weeping with Mary.

It's very powerful. It's very powerful because, you see, here's how it speaks to us. You see, Jesus is the same as he was then as he is now, which means when we weep in grief, when we weep in suffering, it means that the king who wipes away your tears is weeping with you.

That's what it means. That our grief is his. That our suffering is his. If you were to drop a brick on your foot, your foot hurts but the pains registered in your brain by your head instantly, the church is the body of Christ.

When the body hurts when you grieve, Jesus grieves with you. He's not a spectator but he chooses to take on our sorrow in his fullness.

[21 : 15] That's the first thing we want to see. Jesus' free will. Second is Jesus' restraint. He knows everything's going to be alright in the end.

Jesus knows that in ten minutes' time everything's going to be okay. If it were us, we'd say something like, don't cry. It's going to be alright. You'll see. It's fine. Just watch me.

Just watch what I'm going to do in ten minutes. But not Jesus. No, he suspends his joy. Even though he knows victory's around the corner, he doesn't rush Mary and move her on quicker than she needs but validates her pain.

It takes infinite, mighty God power to restrain that power. He doesn't empty himself of power and might but he restrains it.

He's got the power of creation readily available at his fingertips. If he couldn't restrain it, imagine what that would be like.

[22 : 23] He's got more power. We thought of the power of the nuclear bomb. He's got more power than that and yet he harnesses and restrains it. The restraining of power is total, complete authority.

The final one is Jesus' anger. Verse 33. We see he's deeply moved. That word deeply moved, you can't really do it justice in the English.

It actually means that, and it would sound weird if it wrote it like this, it means to snort with anger.

That's what it means to be deeply moved for Jesus in the air. To snort with anger.

What is he angry at? He's weeping and at the same time he's furious. Indignation. Well, he's actually angry at the effects of sin and the effects of death.

He's outraged of how it affects creation and affects Mary. And he doesn't just accept it but he prepares himself to fight it.

[23 : 32] It is this emotional, compassionate, deeply troubled, sorrow-filled, righteous anger that is the fuel for the miracle. This is the God we need.

One who is fully God and fully man. Not distant, not aloof, but near, suffering, grieving, angry when we hurt and doing something about it, taking it on. This is the man that we need.

The mighty God. The one who comes from heaven to earth who bridges the gap. Fully man able to shed tears that are more than, you know, when he sheds tears they're more than helpless sympathy but they're the tears of God.

They're the tears of the all-knowing. He's not moved with sentimental pity but with deep love and compassion. He never empties himself of divinity but restrains his power and mine.

But now comes the moment when he's going to let that power be shown. Be like putting the power from a nuclear bomb into your home electrics.

[24 : 34] Blow it away. The world's not ready and can't control Jesus. That's where we move to our fourth point. Jesus' power exceeds expectations.

He breaks through their limitations and the limitations that we place on him. Look, verse 38. Once more, Jesus, once more deeply moved he comes to the tomb.

It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. Take away the stone, he said. They go and do what Jesus says. Martha still has no idea. Verse 39, she says, there's a bad odor.

He's been there for days. It's the smell of death in their nostrils. It's the smell of defeat. There's a disconnect, doesn't she?

She says, verse 27, I believe that you're the Messiah, the Son of God who's to come into the world. Here's the stopping thought. There's the reality of the grave there. He looks up to heaven and prays.

[25 : 31] And verse 43, Lazarus, come out. And the power in Jesus' voice commands new life. The same voice that calmed the way, the same voice that spoke creation into being, verse 44, Lazarus walks out, his hands and his feet wrapped with strips of linen and cloth around his face.

Jesus, not only able to prevent death, but can do one better, can raise from death, and give life. He pulls the future into the present. Matthew knew he would be raised in the last day.

Jesus said, I'm going to raise him right now. This is not a prophet asking God for power. This is the eternal God in the person of Jesus exercising his own power. The same power is active today.

It's not relegated to history. Rightly, rightly, there are policies today that control human, nuclear human power because we can't, we don't know how to control it.

Jesus' power outstrips that. People and nations have tried to control him, but he can't be. Yet, his mighty power is not something that the world needs to abandon, but to embrace.

[26 : 48] And it goes one step further, doesn't it? You see, what we see is this actually played out for us with Jesus' own life.

You see, Jesus calls out Lazarus from the grave noting that in a few days he will go into one for us. He takes Lazarus' death so Lazarus can have life.

he does that to make verse 25 a reality on the resurrection and the life. And his mighty power is as much work today as it was then.

Now, we might not see dead bodies walking out of graveyards, but, you know, the story is here to mirror what happens spiritually. There is a devastating verse in Paul's letter to the Ephesian church and he speaks to the Apostle Paul of the reality of every person's spiritual condition.

and he connects it with death. He listens to what he writes. He says, as for you, he's talking to Christians here, he says, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.

[28 : 01] What he means by that is showing where people have come to, which means that every person is born needing life, needing the resurrection power of Jesus.

In a hospital when someone has a cardiac arrest, the patient cannot put the paddles on themselves. They can't shock their own heart. They need a doctor to come and do it.

Jesus is the spiritual doctor able to place the spiritual paddles and give spiritual life. You can't do it to yourself. Only Jesus, only God himself is able.

Without Jesus, Lazarus stays dead. Lazarus is called out. Lazarus doesn't get a say on this. He doesn't have an option whether he chooses to come out or not.

Jesus is in full control. Lazarus come out and he comes out. Jesus' words cannot be ignored. They are divine commands from the mighty God that brings life. So full of power and might that when he calls, people receive life.

[29 : 06] I started by suggesting an opportunity the opportunity this morning is really, you know, it's like no other. Can we really pass it over?

It's the opportunity to have your whole life, physical, emotional and spiritual life flipped and be completely different to live by the power of almighty God. It's a staggering reality.

That the same power that raised Lazarus from the dead, that raised Jesus from the dead on the third day, the power that the world cannot control, stronger, more mighty and effective than anything in creation.

Any nuclear bomb, any volcano, if you believe in this Jesus, you'll be raised from spiritual death to new life in him, not in the future, but today.

could Jesus be calling you? Could he be calling you afresh? Could he be calling you out of the limitations, the one dimensional thinking that we maybe don't say with our mouth that we believe in the way that we live?

[30 : 15] Because he has the power to free you so that you can trust him in every moment of your life. Free to trust him, not in the abstract, but in the day-to-day, in the Mondays with your feet on the ground.

To trust you when you're worried about next week's medical test results, when you're worried about Christmas, when you're worried about or fearing what it's going to be like on Christmas Day, when you're worried about the loneliness or there's people in your family that you're scared for.

Jesus is risen and by believing in him, so are you. Jesus is risen, he's on your side, he's weeping with you and he's angry at the effect that sin and death has.

Where in your life, where in your life do you need to know his resurrection power today? It's there for you, to take hold of.

The Jesus we see here is the same Jesus in the manger, the same Jesus who had this power and might, or his fingertips, was the one who was dependent on his mother to feed him, hear his cries when he was hungry and needed a nappy.

[31 : 33] Isn't that the wonder and miracle of Christmas? That we don't just coo over a baby, but we behold that the mighty God became a man so that he could enter your pain and lift you out of it.

Whatever limits you've placed on him, today is the time to let them go and trust him once again or maybe even for the first time in the mighty God made man who came to raise you up.

Let's pray. Almighty God, we are staggered by what Christmas means.

The mighty God who created the universe, who has ultimate power, would come down and make himself small.

You would make yourself small to be a baby dependent on another human to live. And yet at the same moment have all the power at your fingertips.

[32 : 50] We can't even comprehend and understand what that looks like and what that means in some ways. How does that happen? It is a marvel and causes us to wonder at the mysteries, at your mysteries.

We know, we praise you as we see in the life of your son. We see the power that you were able to call upon. We see the power that you have to raise people from death to life that you still do today. But we see the care and the compassionate nature that you have for us, that you are there for us, even in the most hardest moments of our lives, that you weep with us. And so I pray that as we come and as we think, as we draw towards Christmas, that you would centre our hearts on Jesus, again, on your son.

We just commit our lives and ourselves into your hands and pray for your blessing upon us. We ask for this, in the name of Christ. Amen.