

Christ Our Messiah: A Eulogy

Good Friday Service, Willow Creek Baptist Church, April 2010

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Most of the text is quoted chronologically from the Gospel of John (ESV), some from Luke and the other Gospels.

On PowerPoint: And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. John 17:3 (Then show the name of each of the following individuals as they speak.)

1. **Mary**—"The angel said He would be great and would be called the Son of the Most High. He said the Lord God would give to him the throne of his father David, that he would reign over the house of Jacob forever, and that his kingdom would never end. I believed then, and I believe now. He was born of a virgin, as foretold. He performed miracles. He never sinned. Somehow, He will conquer death itself to save us. The prophecies have all been true, and I will never stop trusting, never stop believing that my Son—God's Son, my Redeemer—will rise again.
2. **Nicodemus**—I went to Him during the night and told him that I knew He had come from God. After all, no one could do the signs that He did unless God was with Him. Do you know what He told me? He said, "Nicodemus, unless one is born again, He cannot see the kingdom of God." Imagine my confusion—how can a man be born again when he is old? Jesus continued, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again." I still did not understand, so I asked Him again, "How can these things be?" He gently rebuked me then: "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life." It was starting to make sense to me. I knew at this point that He was speaking of Himself. Then He gave the most profound, poignant speech. Both simple and incomprehensible. I've thought of it so often that I've memorized it. He said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 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. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God." From that point on, I knew He was the Messiah.
3. **Woman of Samaria**—I was on my way to Jacob's well, and saw Him sitting there. When He asked me for a drink, I almost fell over. I asked, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask

for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria? The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans!” He answered, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, Give me a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” Can you imagine? Living water? I had no idea what He was talking about. I was intrigued but skeptical. “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep,” I said. “Where do you get that living water?” He answered, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” I still didn’t know what He meant, but it sounded amazing, and I blurted out, “Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” Then He really put me on the spot: “Go, call your husband, and come here.” I fidgeted. “I have no husband,” I told him. And then He looked right through me: “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband,’ He said; ‘for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.’” I was stunned, embarrassed beyond belief. I hem-hawed around, trying to distract him with theological questions about the coming Messiah. He just looked at me and said quietly, even gently, “I who speak to you am he.” Right then His disciples came back, but I didn’t stick around to hear their conversation. I was already running into town, calling, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” I believed without a shadow of a doubt that He was. Many others from my town also believed in Him that day and later that week, after we convinced him to stay longer. I am so glad He talked to me that life-changing day.

4. **Official whose son Jesus healed**—My son was ill, and when I heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, I went to him and asked him to come down and heal him, for he was at the point of death. Jesus said to me, “Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe.” I said to him, “Sir, come down before my child dies,” and He just looked at me and said, “Go; your son will live.” I believed His word, and went on my way, hastening to return to my son. As I went, my servants met me on the way and told me that my son was recovering. I asked them what time he began to get better, and they told me the exact time when Jesus said to me, “Your son will live.” I believed right then, along with my whole household. He healed my son just by speaking a word.

Songs

5. **Crippled man at Pool of Bethesda**—For thirty-eight years I had been crippled, waiting for healing. Then one Sabbath, Jesus saw me there at the pool of Bethesda and asked me, “Do you want to be healed? Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” At once I was healed, took up my bed, and walked. For the first time in almost four decades, I could walk! Then some Jewish leaders told me it was unlawful for me to take up my bed. I explained to them, “The man who healed me said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’ They asked me who it was, and I honestly did not know. There was a huge crowd, and He was gone

already. Later, He found me in the temple, and said, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” Then I knew that He was the Messiah.

6. **Boy with the loaves and fish**—We were all following Him, listening to what He said, watching to see what miracle He would do next, and I was getting hungry. I had brought my lunch—five loaves, two small fish, just the usual. There were at least 5,000 people there, I heard someone say. All of a sudden, one of his most faithful disciples, the ones who were with Him all the time, every time I saw Him, was at my elbow, asking me to share my lunch. I handed it over and watched as those faithful disciples made everyone sit down. We were in a huge grassy place, and everyone sat down. Then Jesus took my lunch, gave thanks, and began handing it out to those who were seated—my five little loaves and two tiny little fish that I had caught—He just kept handing them out and handing them out and handing them out, it was so crazy. I kept waiting for Him to run out, and He never did. Just went right on handing out fish and bread to everyone sitting there, thousands and thousands, and when everyone was getting full, those same twelve disciples gathered up the leftovers, and filled up twelve baskets full of food! Each one of them had a big basket chock full of fish and bread! Nobody could believe it. I think I must have eaten six loaves and three fishes myself! It was unreal. Everyone was exclaiming, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” Just when we all wanted to make Him king right then and there, He slipped away by Himself and left us there with all those leftovers. I kept looking at them, thinking about my little lunch that I’d packed, and seeing how far He had made it stretch. You’ve never seen anything like it. He had to be the Son of God. Had to be. Nobody else could do that.
7. **Peter**—He told the crowds one day that no one could come to Him unless it was granted to him by the Father. After that, so many of his followers turned back and stopped walking with Him, that He asked us, “Do you want to go away as well?” I just said looked at Him and said, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” Another time He asked us who the crowds thought He was, and I said, “You are the Son of God.” He said to me, “Blessed are you, Peter! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” But then He told us not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah, which I didn’t understand. About a week later, we went up on the mountain to pray—me, James, John, and Jesus. While He prayed, His face changed, and His clothes became dazzling white. Moses and Elijah appeared, speaking to Him of his departure. We had been sleeping, but somewhere in the middle of their conversation, we woke up, and we saw His glory and the two prophets with Him. As they were leaving, I suggested, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” But even as the words came out of my mouth, a cloud came and overshadowed us, and we were afraid as we entered it. A voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my chosen One; listen to him!” And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was alone. That time He didn’t tell us not to tell anyone what we had seen, but He didn’t have to. There were no words to describe the experience. We spent every

day for three whole years with the Son of God Himself! Walking on water was pretty amazing, even though my faith faltered then, but that day—the day when His glory shone so bright—that was the best day of all. The worst day was today. They have crucified my Lord, and I—His disciple and friend—denied him not once, not twice, but three times, just as He said. The fear of man trumped my faith in God. There is no excuse for what I’ve done. I should have been there beside Him, unafraid, unashamed, for the very power of God is His.

8. **Canaanite woman whose daughter He healed**—When he came to Tyre and Sidon, he entered quietly, but He could not be hidden. I saw Him coming and ran out, crying after Him, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” But He did not answer me a word. I kept following Him, and I heard his disciples beggin him to send me away, but I kept crying out after Him. Finally, He turned and answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” I knelt before Him and persisted, “Lord, help me.” He said, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” I swallowed hard. He said this because I am a Canaanite, not an Israelite; He was objecting to my non-Jewish background. But I knew that He could save my precious, sweet daughter. I spoke right past the huge lump in my throat: “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” I hung my head. I was so broken, my daughter in such need, and I had heard of this man—this God-man who spoke with authority to demons and sent them fleeing, begging for mercy—that I just blurted it out, without fear. He paused, then said to me, “O, woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire. For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.” I went straight home—I practically flew—and found her lying in bed. The demon was gone.

Songs

9. **Samaritan Leper**—On His way to Jerusalem, passing between Samaria and Galilee, Jesus entered a village. My heart raced when I saw Him. We were standing at a distance. We are—that is, we were—lepers. We could not enter the village, because of our disease. But we had heard He was coming, and we’d been waiting, craning our necks, straining our eyes, hoping to see Him, hoping to catch His attention as He passed by. When He entered the village, there were ten of us standing together at a distance, calling loudly to Him, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” When He saw us, He said, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” Excited beyond words, we hurried to obey, and as we went, we were cleansed. We all began to shout and hastened our steps, but suddenly I stopped short. What was I doing? This man—this Jesus, of Whom we had heard such great things—for Whom we had sat waiting, just hoping He would pass by—had come, and had granted our desire! We were healed! I was a strong, healthy man once again—no disease, no sitting outside the city, cast off, shunned—I turned back, praising God with a loud voice, and I fell on my face at His feet, giving Him thanks. He said to me, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to

God except this foreigner? Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.” I hurried to show myself to the priest, still praising God for His mercy on me, a Samaritan.

10. **Zaccheus**—When Jesus came through Jericho, I was searching everywhere for a glimpse of Him. I’d heard he was passing through, but, because of the crowd, I couldn’t see Him, since I’m so short. So I ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for He was about to pass by there. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to me, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” So I hurried and came down and received him joyfully. I said to Him, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” He said to me, “today salvation is come to this house, since you also are a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” I was definitely lost. I was a chief tax collector, very rich, and very lost. I am so glad that Jesus revealed Himself to me.
11. **Woman caught in adultery**—“I am forgiven. The scribes and Pharisees would have shown no mercy, but He . . . He showed such mercy. My sin was paraded before Him, exposed for all to see. I was so ashamed I could not look at anyone. “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery,” they said. “Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” But this Jesus, of Whom I had heard so many good things, ignored them, bent down, and wrote with his finger on the ground. As they continued to ask Him, He stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her,” and He went back to writing in the dirt. I slowly looked up and saw, to my amazement, one by one, beginning with the older ones, people were leaving. I looked at Him, then back at the thinning crowd. Those few moments seemed like forever, until, at last, I was left standing by Him, alone. He stopped writing, stood up, and asked me, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” I said, “No one, Lord.” And He looked at me with authority and compassion in His eyes, and said quietly, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.” My tears fell freely as He turned to go. I knew that I had been forgiven.
12. **Legion**—I met this Jesus when He sailed to the Gerasenes from Galilee. I was naked, living among the tombs, demon possessed. When I saw Him, the demon made me cry out with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” He made me say this because this Jesus had commanded him to come out of me. Many times the demon had seized me, and, though I was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, he would break my bonds and drive me into the desert. This time, Jesus asked me, “What is your name?” I said, “Legion,” because of the many demons who had entered me. They began to beg him not to command them to depart into the abyss. A herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons left me and entered the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into

the lake and drowned. When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. People came to see what had happened, and they found me sitting at His feet, clothed and in my right mind, and they were afraid. Everyone who saw it told how I had been healed, and all of the people of the country asked Him to leave, because they were so afraid. So He got into the boat and returned to Galilee. Before He left, I begged that I might be with Him, but He sent me away, saying, “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” So I went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for me. I’ve been proclaiming it ever since, how He saved me, how He rescued me, body, mind and soul.

Songs

13. **John**—I saw Him raise Lazarus from the dead. I saw Him heal the sick and show mercy on those in need. I saw Him on the mountain when His glory shone whiter than snow, and I saw Him hungry, fasting, never losing sight of His Father’s purpose for Him. I saw Him love the children, notice the lonely, raise the sick and dead, and show compassion on those in need. I heard Him teach with authority, cast out demons, and rebuke the Pharisees, and I also heard him speak with such gentleness to lost sinners whose hearts were receptive, filled with faith, longing to be forgiven. I saw him look Judas in the eye without fear or hatred, though He knew how Judas would betray Him. I heard Him say so many times that He was God’s Son, and I know He spoke the truth. “Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me,” He said. “And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.” His life truly was light in the darkness. Darkness fled from His presence—demons could not abide Him. Hypocrites hated Him, and plotted against Him. He was so full of light and truth. He possessed such great power, yet He practiced complete and unfailing obedience: “For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.” What a privilege it was to serve alongside Him, to live and breathe His ministry for these three years. Of course I will care for His mother as if she were my own. We are puzzled, Mary and I, yet hopeful. Our loss is great, but our Jesus—her Son, and my closest friend—foretold our future in Him, and promised that He would rise up to save us. We cling to that promise, knowing that His Word—His pure Word—cannot and will not fail.
14. **Man born blind**—They thought they were out of earshot, but I heard them as they were passing by. His disciples were asking Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” He stopped walking and turned to face me, and they all stood still, listening. He answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.” Then I heard Him spit on the ground and reach down to retrieve the dirt. Next thing I knew, He was anointing my eyes with mud, saying, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.” So I went and washed, and all at once, I could

see! I could see everything! I came rushing back into town, and people kept saying I looked like the blind man who used to sit and beg, but they wouldn't believe that it was really me. Finally they said, "Well, if it's really you, then how were your eyes opened?" So I told them. Then they brought me to the Pharisees and made me tell my story again. And then they began to claim that this Jesus was not from God, because clearly He was not keeping the Sabbath. Imagine that. I am blind for my whole life, this Jesus shows compassion on me, and all they can think about is whether He dishonored the Sabbath by putting mud on my eyes. They kept on arguing for a while about whether Jesus was from God, and then they asked me what I thought of Him. "He's a prophet," I said simply. They still did not believe me, and finally called my parents to confirm that I was blind from birth. But the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Jesus as the Messiah, they would be removed from the synagogue, so my parents would only say, "He's an adult. Ask him!" Trying to egg me on, the Pharisees said, "Come, give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner." I was getting impatient with these narrow-minded leaders who were supposed to be such experts in the Scriptures. "I don't know whether He is a sinner, I just know that, I was blind, and now look at me—I can see!" Then they asked me AGAIN what He had done to me to open my eyes. I was so tired of this. Couldn't they just rejoice with me? My first day to take in the world, see the trees, the dust on my feet, the colors and faces all around me in such detail, where only shadows and light had been—and here I was, stuck in the synagogue, repeating myself and being questioned as though I'd done something wrong. "I have told you already, and you would not listen." I said, impatiently. "Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" They retorted, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." This was too much for me. I couldn't bite my tongue. "Well, this is an amazing thing!" I said. You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They just snapped back at me, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast me out of the synagogue. I went looking for Him, but I realized I didn't even know what He looked like. Apparently Jesus heard about the whole thing and came and found me, but of course I didn't recognize Him. "Do you believe in the Son of man?" He asked me. "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." I fell to my knees and looked into the blessed face of the One Who had healed me. There was a huge lump in my throat as I said it: "Lord, I believe!"

15. **Lazarus**—I had been sick; very sick, and my sisters asked our friend Jesus to come heal me. "This illness does not lead to death," He told them. "It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." I knew that He loved us, so I didn't question His decision. But I was fading quickly. I don't fear death anymore—it's only supposed to happen once, yet—here I am. I remember feeling so cold and tired, and then I must've gone, because the next thing I knew, I was hearing Jesus' voice calling to me, loud and clear: "Lazarus, come out!" I got up and walked toward His voice. I could not

see—my face was wrapped with a cloth, and my hands and feet were bound with linen strips. The reality of the whole thing hit me all at once: these were burial clothes. MY burial clothes. I had been in a tomb, which means . . . I was dead. Yet there I stood, living, breathing, before my Savior, the crowd hushed in amazement. Many of them believed in Him that day. Soon after, Jesus returned to celebrate Passover with us, and we gave him a special dinner. I'm sure you can imagine how upset the Jewish leaders were, worrying about losing their place. We had heard of plots to kill Him, and now there were plots to kill me too, since so many people kept believing in Him because He had raised me up from the grave itself. But it wasn't my time yet. I know why He did it. My sister Mary told me that, when He asked her to take away the stone, she questioned Him, because I had been dead for four whole days already. He answered, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" Then, just before He called me out of the tomb, He prayed, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." I wish I could have seen their faces when they rolled the stone away. And they wonder if He's really the Messiah! Our amazing Jesus—our Savior. Our Friend.

Songs

16. **Mary of Bethany**—I loved to listen to Him. Sometimes I even left my poor sister to do all the work so that I could hear just a little bit more of His wisdom. We all loved Him so much. When our brother was ill, we couldn't understand why He wouldn't just come. Now we know. He wanted to demonstrate His power—the power of God—and literally bring his dead body to life again, so that men would see His glory. Martha and I were grieving that day, and all at once He turned it into a day of rejoicing, a huge celebration of life. Lazarus lives again! Then, when He observed Passover with us, I anointed His feet with the expensive ointment. It was the right thing to do, worshipping Him with all I had. People murmured about the cost, but they just do not understand Who He is and What He has done. He is Jesus. He is our Messiah. He forgave my sins, became our friend, raised my brother, taught us the Scriptures . . . I cannot say enough about Him or do enough for Him to thank Him and magnify His name. There is none like Him. No one else can do what He can do. There is no question that He is the very Son of God in flesh. He raised Lazarus; I know He will rise again.
17. **Philip**—As long as I live, I will never forget what He said to me. "I asked Him once, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' He turned to me and said, 'Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Phillip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater

works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.” Later, He told us that the Father Himself loves us, because we have loved him, and have believed that He came from God. He said, “I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.” Right then we understood that He knows all things and does not need anyone to question Him. This is why we believe that He came from God. And when He saw that we finally believed—that we truly understood—He said, “I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

18. **Joseph of Arimathea**—“I buried him today. My Lord and Savior. I have been his follower for so long, but secretly, because I have been so afraid of the Jews. Why did I wait until His death to publicly acknowledge Him? I was ashamed when I asked Pilate today if I might take away His body, knowing that I was not worthy. When he granted permission, Nicodemus and I together anointed and bound the body of our Savior in linen cloths before laying Him in my own tomb. His teachings, all spoken with the authority of God Himself, have been replaying in our minds. I remember hearing Him say that He would be killed and then rise again from the grave. He raised others; why shouldn’t He raise Himself also? And so I wait for my Jesus, the Anointed One, to be alive again.

Songs, Communion