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## HOW HUMAN WAS JESUS?

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### Part 2 of Vintage Jesus

Pastor Mark Driscoll | October 15, 2006

You are listening to “Vintage Jesus” – a sermon series answering 12 common questions about Jesus presented by Pastor Mark Driscoll. The following is a presentation of Mars Hill Church in Seattle. For more audio and video content, please visit [marshillchurch.org](http://marshillchurch.org).

The following interview does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of Mars Hill Church.

Male: My name is Dustin Kensrue. I play in a band called Thrice.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: How human do you think Jesus actually was?

Male: He was very, very human. I don’t think that – I think that if he wasn’t, the disciples wouldn’t have had such a hard time grasping who he was, and I think that’s kind of essential to who he was and in being here. But I don’t know. I think if he wasn’t fully human, it just – it changes the story quite a bit and makes it almost a mockery. I don’t know.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Like he’s faking it?

Male: Yeah.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: I know. You get the impression sometimes like some people think he’s Superman. He looks like a guy who’s struggling, but he’s really Clark Kent. It’s all just an act.

Male: But when you – I mean when you read the scripture, it’s real. He’s laughing, crying. He’s living.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: A fan writes to you – let’s say it’s a young kid in college who’s a big fan – and he asks the question, “Jesus Christ is supposed to be God who’s a man. What in the world does that mean, and how in the world am I supposed to understand a God who became a person?”

Male: The sentiment behind it or the reason behind it would be – well I think a huge reason is the empathetic nature of God to put himself where we are and suffer in our place and I think understand where we’re coming from.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Do you think he really did suffer?

Male: Yes. I mean I –

Pastor Mark Driscoll: I mean emotionally and personally?

Male: Yeah, and I think that gets into issues of like – there’s a lot of theological debate, but like how God limited himself.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Do you think he was tempted to sin – truly tempted? I mean a lot of women probably liked him. I’m sure he was offered big money. I’m sure somebody from the record industry came along and wanted to do a seven album deal. Do you think he was really tempted?

Male: I think for him to have been fully human, he would have to have been. I think – I don’t know. Is that an essential part of our nature – to be able to be tempted? I guess it would be – starting – if you’re talking about Adam and Eve – They had that free will. The free will implies that you’re able to be tempted to choose separate of God’s will.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Evening Mars Hill. How you all doing? Big questions tonight: How human was Jesus?

I’ve been getting weird questions all day. “Did he go potty?”

Yes, number one and number two. We’ll deal with all of that in great detail this evening.

If you are new, my name is Mark. I’m one of the pastors here at the church. We normally go right through books of the Bible, and we will start the book of Ruth – the greatest love story in the Bible – beginning in January. But we’re doing a small series this fall – 12 weeks – called “Vintage Jesus”, looking at 12 of the biggest, most significant questions about the person and the work of Jesus.

So I’ll go ahead and pray, but you should have obtained on your way in something called “The Loop”, and that will have the notes that will direct our course of study together this evening, that way you can double check and follow along and make sure I’m telling the truth.

So good to have you all out. I'll go ahead and pray and we'll get right to work as we look at this question of the humanity of Jesus. Very important question to be sure.

Lord Jesus, you told us to pray to you, so we do. You told us to ask for things in your name, so we are. We're asking that you would make yourself known. We want to know who you are. We want to know about the life that you lived, and we want to know how that relates to our life. And so, Lord Jesus, would you please help the scriptures to be made known to us this evening? May you enable me to do a good job teaching them clearly by the power of the Holy Spirit? And, Lord Jesus, may we all walk away understanding that you're a God who deeply, profoundly loves us – who has sympathized with us and who is willing to comfort us, and may we run to you? That is our prayer, and we ask it in your good name. Amen.

Well tonight as we begin our discussion about the humanity of Jesus – “How human was Jesus?” – I want to start by saying that the reason we are focusing on Jesus is that Jesus is the centerpiece of Christian faith. Unlike some religions, Christianity is not held together by a place, a nation, a mosque, a temple, a synagogue, a language, a culture, a race of people or a period of history. Christianity is held together by Jesus Christ. And everything in Christianity points to and is about that man, Jesus Christ – who he is and what he has done.

Last week we looked at the question “Is Jesus the only God?” And we answered it “yes”. He repeatedly says that he was, and they put him to death for that fact, and he proved it through his miracles, including his own resurrection.

This week we look at the other side of Jesus' life and we ask “How human was Jesus?” Was he really someone who lived a life like ours, or was his considerably different?

And the first thing I want to tell you is that Jesus was a dude, and Jesus looked like a normal dude, right? So many of the pictures of Jesus, he's very tall, nice jaw – just very rugged, European features. We don't know what Jesus looks like, except for it tells us in Isaiah 53:2 that “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”

I don't know what he looked like. He may have looked like George Costanza. I don't know. He may not have been tall. He may have been short. He may not have had long, flowing, rocker dude, drag queen, Jesus hair. He may have had a thinning, receding hairline. I don't know.

What we do know is that he was a carpenter, so he may have been in fairly decent shape – calluses on his hands from swinging a hammer. There were no power tools in that day, so he was a manual laborer. He walked a lot, so he may have been lean and thin and rugged.

But if you've seen the pictures of drag queen Jesus, it's very troubling, to be honest with you. He tends to have very long hair with product. Wears a dress. Open toed sandals. Listens to a lot of Elton John. That kind of thing. And it's hard to worship him, because you could beat him up, even if you're a girl. It's hard to worship someone you could beat up.

The t-shirt I am wearing, for example, is an example of drag queen Jesus. You'll notice he has very long, beautiful, curly hair and nice features. A little rouge on his cheeks. He didn't look like that. And it also says, “Jesus watches you download porn,” which is theologically correct and actually true. One of my favorite t-shirts actually.

And when we're talking about Jesus' appearance, we're talking about someone who looked very much like an average, normal, blue-collar construction worker. Some think that he took a Nazarite vow, which Samson did in Numbers, Chapter 6, which means you don't cut your hair and you never consume alcohol. Well Jesus didn't take a Nazarite vow. He was, however, from the town of Nazareth. Some people confuse those and then assume he didn't drink, and he had long hair, and neither of those things are true. He probably had short hair.

So if you would have looked at Jesus, he looked very normal. He's a guy going to work with a lunchbox and calluses on his hands. He's in his early 30's.

People have asked me today, “So Jesus had a human body?”

Yes, he had ears, and he had a nose and toes, and like my daughters say, he had the boy part, and all that kind of stuff. Yeah, he really did. And I'm not trying to be sacrilegious, but he was a guy.

I actually had somebody today honestly ask me, “Do you think Jesus went potty?”

Well I hope so. I mean, to live 33 years and eat and not, is very uncomfortable as a general rule. So yes, Jesus did number one and number two – perfectly apparently. Never got the lid all wet. He was – I won't go there, but I could and it would be funny.

Anyways, give the bloggers something to do in their free time.

So Jesus looked very normal, and he also lived very normal. Luke 2:52 says that “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

So he grew up. He started off as a little baby – needed to be changed and fed – and then became a toddler who knew how to walk. And became a little boy who learned how to read and write. And then when he got older, his voice dropped in puberty and he grew a beard, and then he became a man. And yeah, he grew physically.

It says he also grew spiritually. He had to read his Bible and pray and go to religious meetings like we do. And yeah, Jesus grew physically and spiritually, and in so far as his reputation was concerned. So if you would have seen him, he looked like a normal human being. And the truth is too, the

Bible talks about many aspects of his humanity.

Jesus had a mom, Mary, and the Bible says in a few places that he really did love and care for his mother. He also, we are told, obeyed his parents, which may be an argument that he is in fact divine. Any kid who obeys his parents may in fact be a miracle. And that Jesus obeyed his parents. He also had two brothers, James and Jude – so kid brothers he wrestled with and such. He went to the equivalent of church services where he worshiped God. He got hungry and he ate. He got thirsty and he drank.

The Bible says he also didn't know everything. He asked a lot of questions. "Hey, what happened here?" and "What about this?" and "Where's this?" And he asked questions.

He also got stressed out on occasion. This may surprise some of you, but when there's a lot of pressure and turmoil and hardship and difficulty, the natural physiological bodily response is stress. And the Bible says on repeated occasions that Jesus was distressed – that he had stress. That's part of being a human being.

It says he was astonished, both at the faith of one person and the lack of faith in some others. He was happy. He had compassion. He was a man of empathy and kindness and mercy. He also had friends who were male and female.

It says that there were two sisters, Mary and Martha, and their brother, Lazarus, and these are some of Jesus' best friends. He hangs out at their house a lot; eats with them. It says that he loved Mary and Martha. He loved Lazarus. And what this shows is that Jesus had friendships with men that he loved, but it wasn't gay, and he had friendships with women that he loved, but it wasn't him sleeping with them or taking advantage of them or dating them inappropriately. And Jesus is in that way a great example for us all, especially those of us who are unmarried and looking at, "Well how can I have a good relationship with someone of the opposite gender that isn't sexual and sinful, but is very loving and more like a brother/sister relationship?" Well Jesus had a lot of those kinds of friendships.

Jesus also, though he was not a parent or a father, kids loved him, and he loved kids, and they came to him. And apparently Jesus too was a fun guy to hang out with, 'cause he kept getting invited to parties and holidays and such. That was the big accusation against him – "He's a friend of drunkards and gluttons, and every time we see him, he's at a party." Well he went to the parties, but he didn't get drunk, and he didn't eat too much, and he didn't end up with a lampshade on his head on the karaoke machine singing George Michael tunes like some demon. He was able to have fun and go to parties and celebrate holidays without sinning, right? I mean he's not the drunk guy after seven Rum and Cokes doing Bon Jovi covers. He wasn't that guy. He was still a guy, however, that people liked to hang out with, and they'd invite him over to dinner and, "Hey, we're having a party. Let's call Jesus." And I think one of the reasons the religious folks hated him is 'cause they never got invited to any parties 'cause they were no fun at all, and that's the way religious people tend to be.

The question then becomes – well last week we looked at the Jesus said and proved that he was God, and that this week we're looking at that Jesus definitely was fully human, and then the question is, "Well is Jesus God or is he a man?" And the answer is, yep, he's the God-man. That's what he is. He is God become a man. And we need to keep both of these truths together.

Blaise Pascal, a philosopher – a Christian philosopher in the 17th century – wrote, "The church has had as much difficulty in showing that Jesus Christ was man against those who denied it as in showing that he was God, and the probabilities were equally great."

What he's saying is this. Some people say, "He's God, but not man." Others say, "He's a man, but he's not God." And the truth is, he's both and we need to maintain both vigorously.

Madeline L'Engle, a great American writer, said, "To be a Christian is to believe in the impossible. Jesus was God. Jesus was human." She got it right.

Martin Luther, the great reformer, said, "You should point to the whole man, Jesus Christ, and say 'That is God.' The man, Jesus Christ, is God."

And Saint Athanasius, who was Bishop of Alexandria in the 4th century, wrote, "He" – meaning Jesus – "became what we are, that he might make us what he is."

So Jesus God? Yes. Jesus man? Yes.

You say, "Why is this important to maintain?"

There are two basic ways to error in the identity of Jesus. One is to say, "He's God, but he's not really a man." The other is to say, "He's a good man, but he's not really God." And so the first is where we say, "Jesus is a good man, but he's not really the eternal, one, true, only, real God. He's just a really great guy."

Historically, the ancient heretics, the Ebionites and the Nestorians said this.

The Jehovah's Witnesses say this – "He's a great guy, but not God."

Mormons say that "he was a man who became God," so they're denying the full divinity of Jesus as the only God.

Liberal Christians – emergent Christians who follow in their steps and also the Da Vinci Code – really stress the humanity of Jesus, but denied the divinity of Jesus.

The result is, “Jesus is a great guy. Jesus is a guru. Jesus is a spiritual teacher. Jesus is a liberator. He’s a cynic sage. He’s a wise man. He has miracles and powers, or maybe he’s a magician, or maybe he is some extraterrestrial, but he’s not God.” And that mistake is very tragic.

And it also is common in Christian art. I don’t know if you’ve seen the pictures of baby Jesus in Catholic and Orthodox art. He’s a freak in those pictures. He’s a little kid, but he looks just like an itty-bitty man. You notice that? He looks like a man got washed in hot water and shrunk down to mini-me size. And he’s freakish. He’s like a little bobblehead sort of. It’s freakish. And he’s very serious and adult looking. If I had a kid like that, I’d sleep with one eye open. There’s something wrong with that kid. And you could tell it’s Jesus, ‘cause what does he always have around his head? A big halo.

Now during his life, people weren’t sure that Jesus was God, but I’m sure if he had a big fat halo, they would have figured it out, right?

“Hmm, which one’s the Messiah? I bet ya it’s the one with the big halo. Write that down in our handy-dandy notebook. We’ve just figured out Blue’s Clues.”

Jesus didn’t walk around with the big halo as a little kid. You know, we sing a song “Jesus, no crying he makes.” What kind of kid doesn’t cry? Every kid cries. They can’t talk. They’re like, “There’s something warm in the back. Ahhh!” They cry. I mean Jesus cried when he was a baby. He was fully human.

The other is to say that Jesus Christ was God, but he wasn’t really totally, completely, fully a human being. This is taught by the ancient heretics, the Docetists, the New Age today.

And also what’s interesting as well, those who would deny the full humanity of Jesus, they would sort of tell you that he really didn’t live a life like ours. I got my first experience of this from a fundamentalist pastor who was Protestant Christian. I was a new Christian. I was going to one church, but I took a class at another church, ‘cause I wanted to learn. And the fundamentalist pastor had a position that was common to a lot of fundamentalists – meaning they believe Jesus is God, but they really are curious or diminish or even dismiss the fact that he was really a human being and that he suffered and was tempted, and those kinds of things. So I asked him, ‘cause I was curious as a new Christian – I said, “Pastor, explain to me how Jesus was tempted. I don’t get it,” ‘cause in Hebrews 2, Hebrews 4, Matthew 4, Luke 4, it says, “Jesus was tempted.”

Here’s what he said. “He wasn’t really tempted.”

I was like, “Well it says he was tempted, and that’s a weird way to say he wasn’t.”

Like if I said, “Take a left,” and you say, “I meant right. You were supposed to interpret it that way.” You’d be like, “Well that’s not the best way to say it. To say he was tempted, and what that means, he wasn’t tempted, that’s a very confusing way to say it. What do you mean he wasn’t tempted?”

And he said, “Well you believe Jesus is God, right?”

I said, “Yeah, I believe he was God.”

“Then he couldn’t have been tempted, ‘cause only people are tempted.”

And he took me to James 1:13 where it says, “God can not be tempted.” And he said, “There you go. Jesus is God. He can’t be tempted.”

I said, “How do you explain all the temptations and the sufferings and the crying and the hardship and the difficulties?”

And he said, “Basically he was faking it.”

I said, “He was faking it? Jesus was a faker? That doesn’t help at all. Walking on water, healing people, saying he’s God, rising from death – where do we stop with the faking it? Like this is worrisome if we say ‘Jesus is a faker.’ Now we’ve got all kinds of trouble.” I said, “I don’t think Jesus was a faker.”

But his point was that Jesus was basically like Superman. Let me explain this to you. If you were to see Superman, he looked like Clark Kent, the mild mannered reporter, right? And bullets come flying at him, and villains come chasing him, and hardship befalls him, and buildings fall on him, and he gets hit by a car. And you’re like, “Oh no,” but then you remember he’s not really Clark Kent. He’s – dah, dah, dah, dah – Superman. He’s got a big red “S” on his chest, and just the bullets fly off, and the cars bounce off of him, and the building collapses on his head, and it doesn’t even mess up his hair. He’s Superman.

And the picture was taught by this fundamentalist pastor and many who share his view – that Jesus appeared like a humble, marginalized, Galilean peasant who was suffering and bleeding and dying and tempted and broke. But not really, ‘cause underneath the peasant garb was Superman.

And I’ll tell you what. If that’s true, Jesus is a faker. And if that’s true and you believe that – if you want to live like Jesus, you’ll be a fake. People will come to you and say, “How are you doing?”

You’ll say, “I am great. I am doing fine. I’m more than a conqueror of Christ.”

“But it seems like you’re sick, or your love one died, or your flat broke, or it’s not going so good.”

“Yes, but you have not seen the big red “S” on my chest – Saved.”

And those kind of people, I just want to punch them in the throat 'cause they're fakers, and I feel like saying, "It's okay to cry and say 'life stinks, and I'm having a hard time, and I'm really tempted, and I feel weak and vulnerable,' because Jesus really was tempted. Jesus really did have some bummed days and some hard times, and he wasn't just faking it. So Jesus gives us permission to be human and not fake it like we're superheroes."

1 Timothy 2:5 says that there is "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

To mediate between us and God and to reconcile us to God, Jesus needed to be fully God and fully man. If he's not fully God, he can't connect us to God. And if he's not fully man, he can't represent mankind. And so Jesus was and is fully God, fully man.

Now this was debated. Christians believed it, but there were lots of false teachers throughout history who were rising up saying, "No, he was just a man," or, "No, he was just God." Not saying "He is the God-man." And so a lot of pastors, theologians, Bible teachers, got together at what is known as the Council of Chalcedon. This was in 451 A.D., and they were wrestling with the question of the nature of Jesus, or the natures of Jesus, and they decided after long, intense, accurate biblical study that "Jesus Christ" – it is said in the Chalcedon Creed – "is one person with two natures."

See we just have one nature – human nature. We're a person. We're not God.

"Jesus was one person with two natures – fully God, fully man – divine in the one person, Jesus."

He possessed both. And we here at Mars Hill fully agree with the Chalcedon Creed and we believe that is clearly the biblical teaching. They came up – they used the word, rather, "hypostatic union". You're gonna get some big words tonight. Hypostatic union, which is the Greek word for person – saying that in this one person Jesus, there is the dual natures of God and man. And the theological nomenclature that we use to explain this is called the incarnation, where the invisible, immaterial, eternal God enters into human history; humbles himself; takes upon himself human flesh; becomes a man. And that word "incarnation" is derived from the Latin word which means "in the flesh" – that the spirit, eternal, second member of the Trinity became the man, Jesus Christ, in human flesh.

This is exactly what is said, for example, in John 1:14 – that "The Word" – that is Jesus – "became flesh." That's exactly what incarnation means.

1 John 4:2 I think it is, John says, "Only Christians accept that Jesus Christ is God who came into human history as a human being with flesh and blood and bone as a real person to live on this earth."

Now this is the position of Orthodox and Catholic and Protestant Christians. Some people say, "Christians don't agree." Actually, on the issues of Jesus, we do. And on this issue, all Christians agree. It doesn't matter if you're Protestant like us, or a Catholic brother or sister, or an Orthodox brother or sister. All Christians, whatever their tradition, believe these same truths about Jesus – one person, two natures – and we accept that there is mystery in that.

The question then becomes, "How could this happen? How could God become a human being? How could God enter into human history as a person to live a life shockingly like ours?"

One of the key texts in the Bible that explains how this transpired is Philippians, Chapter 2. In there, in verses 5 through 11, it explains how Jesus is God become a human being. It says it this way in Philippians 2:5. It should be in your notes. "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature" – what? – "God," – so who's Jesus? God. He's very clear about that. He's not ambiguous. Though "being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped," – he didn't say, "I must remain in heaven and be worshiped by the angels, and I refuse to go on the mission to earth to save sinners," but rather he "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant," – that God got off his throne; came into human history as a servant, or as a slave, to serve us. We're seeing Jesus here in humility stooping down to be with us, 'cause he loves us – "being made in human likeness." Becoming a human being. "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself" – so when you see Jesus on the earth, you see him not in his glorious state of exaltation, but in his humble state of incarnation. That's what he's saying.

Jesus is really humble. He's the suffering servant promised in the second half of Isaiah. He came into human history to humbly serve you and me, though he is God.

He says "became obedient to death – even death on a cross!"

Jesus humbled himself and Jesus served us through dying for our sins on the cross.

He goes on to say, "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus" – that's why we talk about Jesus so much. It's all about Jesus.

I was listening to the radio recently and it broke my heart. Even some good pastors and Christian Bible teachers, I was listening to their sermons, and I listened actually for quite some time many teachers, and I never once heard the name of Jesus. I thought, "That is a sad thing, because it's all about Jesus and we're supposed to talk about Jesus, and sing to Jesus, and trust in Jesus, and live like Jesus, and be like Jesus."

He says that the goal is that the name of Jesus – "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow," – that's worship of Jesus – "in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," – or God – "to the glory of God the Father."

What he's saying is this – Jesus Christ is God, and he didn't have to do this, but in humility and love, he came into human history to identify with us, and to serve us, and to suffer, and to die on the cross, and to rise to take away our sins, because Jesus Christ loves us. Jesus Christ is humble, and Jesus

Christ serves.

That's what he says. "I didn't come to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many."

Now what this does not mean is that when Jesus became a human being that he ceased to be God. It doesn't mean that. That Jesus was, even during his life on the earth, still God. In fact, the title that was given him in Matthew, Chapter 1, is Emanuel, which means what? God is with us. So even when Jesus was with us on the earth, he remained fully continually God.

And some of you will say, "But he doesn't show the attributes of God. God is all present and Jesus is in a place. God is unchanging, immutable, and Jesus grew." That "God is all knowing and Jesus asked questions. How could that be?"

Well Philippians says that "Jesus Christ maintained all of his attributes as God." He is all powerful, all knowing, all present and unchanging, but he set those aside and he lived a human life to identify with us. That was his humility. This does not mean that he does not possess those attributes. It just means that occasionally he used them, but for the most part, Jesus lived a life just like we live our life, by the power of the Holy Spirit. He needed to learn. He needed to work his job. He needed to pray. He needed to read his Bible. He needed to worship. He needed to work on his relationships. He had the same kind of things to do in his life that we have to do in ours to walk in holiness. And again, this does not mean that Jesus ceased to be God.

Augustine says it this way – "Christ added to himself that which he was not and did not lose what he was." So "Jesus remained God," Augustine the great church father said, "and he didn't lose his divinity, but he laid along side of that, the additional aspect of his humanity."

This doesn't mean that Jesus' identity changed, but that his role changed. He didn't cease to be God, but he became a humble servant who identified with us.

Let me use an imperfect analogy to explain this. Imperfect and flawed, I confess. But I'm a dad, and in a little way, I'm Lord of the Driscoll home. Just bare with me on that point. And in my little kingdom, I have five children. I have two daughters that I love. They're very girly. We go shoe shopping and out to tea, and on the Mary and Ginger scale, they're leaning more Ginger. They're very sort of high maintenance little girls who like shoes and tea and flowers. And I love that, 'cause they're girly and I dig 'em. So we have lots of fun, but they don't want to wrestle, pee in the yard, eat meat, or make everything into a gun. Their brothers, however, do.

They have three brothers. The oldest is Zachariah Blaise, who's about seven, Calvin Martin, who's almost 5, and Gideon Joseph, who's eight months. And those boys love to pee in the yard, eat meat, and turn everything into a weapon. So even a gun becomes a gun dog. You know what I'm talking about. Or a hotdog becomes a gun.

And so the way it works is when I get home, the first thing my boys want to do is have an ultimate fight, because we watch a lot of ultimate fighting at the Driscoll house, and that's how it goes.

So when I get in the house, they are usually often times awaiting, shirts off, at the door. It's three on one and they're ready to go. And the eight-month-old is pulling himself across the floor ready to go, and he will look at me and snort, 'cause he can't talk yet, so that's his "I'm gonna whoop you like a man" look. And they want to wrestle with their dad. It's go time. So what happens is I get down on the ground. I humble myself to serve them. I stoop down to their level and I let them practice all their moves. So my son who's almost five is working on his triangle choke, and my seven-year-old is working on his arm bar, and the eight-month-old can't do much, so he crawls up on me and beats on me, and they're trying to conquer their dad.

And this is fun. We're playing, having fun. It's a great time. Now sometimes I will let them win, and they feel very good. "I tapped Dad out." I mean they'll run and tell their mom that they "tapped Dad out with a triangle choke" or something. And the truth is that in those moments that I let them win, I do not cease to be the father. Like they don't get to sit at the head of the table and eat the big piece of chicken. I'm still Dad, right? And I have all the rights as Dad, like the nice seat at the table, and the big piece of chicken, and the remote control and such, and I'm still the head of the household. But what this also doesn't mean is that I don't have available to me all of my attributes. I still have all of my strength and power and terrorizing might and lightening quick speed for example. I just choose not to use that on the eight-month-old, 'cause I don't want to see CPS, and I don't want to kill my kids, so I'll even wrestle with the eight-month-old at the eight-month-old strength level.

All of that to say I'm stooping down. I'm humbling. I'm serving. I'm identifying with my boys. I'm breaking it down to their level. I want to be with them. And Jesus – Philippians 2 says that he did the same thing. He humbled himself. He came down. I mean he could have just blown us all away, and instead he was humbled. He was serving. He was gracious and he really did live a human life like ours.

And let me state this clearly. I am not saying that Jesus is a man who became God. Some religions will tell you that we can become Gods, and that is the first lie from the book of Genesis. "Satan came to our first parents and said, 'You don't need God. You could be your own God.'"

No.

Mormons actually teach that. So do various aspects of the New Age. We don't believe that. We don't believe that human beings become God. We don't believe that Jesus was a mere man who became God or one of the God's. We instead believe exactly the opposite – that there is one God and he became a man. That's what we're saying.

Now this leads to all the questions. How human was Jesus? Was he really a man? How human was he, and what kind of man was he?

I'll tell you some aspects of Jesus you may not have known. The first is that he was funny. Now some of you have never heard this. You've been in the wrong church. You've been told that Jesus was not funny. He was very religious and serious, and I think that's funny. Jesus had a sense of humor.

Now not all people see this. G.K. Chesterton, for example – a good author with a book called *Orthodoxy* – the last line of the book, he says, “The one thing that Jesus hid from us was his mirth,” meaning his sense of humor.

Frederick Nietzsche thought the same thing. The great Atheist philosopher said, “It’s too bad Jesus didn’t learn how to laugh.” One of the reasons he rejected Jesus is he thought Jesus was boring.

Some of you may have rejected Jesus thinking that he’s dull, and to die and go to heaven is like dying and going to the eternal dentist. You’re like, “No, thank you. I will go to hell. I think the rockers are going there anyways, and there’ll be a mosh pit, so I will go to hell, and there’ll be beer, and it will be fun.”

That is generally the impression – heaven is for all the bored people and hell is where all the action is, because Jesus is the dullard of dullards, right? That is sort of the false impression of Jesus.

Now let me say this. Do you really think that Jesus went camping with 12 guys for three years and never told a joke or never laughed at one? Any of you guys ever been camping with other guys? That’s basically what they did. Have you ever been fishing with your buddies, no women around, and you have the “pull my finger” marathon? You know what I’m talking about?

Some of you are saying, “Are you saying Jesus played pull my” – look it doesn’t say. I’m just saying it’s possible.

How do you hang out with 12 guys, mainly blue-collar, for three years and not tell a joke or laugh at one? Can you image one of the guys telling a joke and Jesus be like, “You knock it off. We’re religious men. This is serious business and I will not tolerate shenanigans.”

I can’t image the guys hanging out with a guy like that, and that guy never gets invited to parties, right? Not like Jesus did.

Ecclesiastes 3 says “there’s a time to laugh”.

I believe Jesus had a perfect sense of humor and perfect comedic timing. And religious people sometimes just don’t get this. They see him as super-duper serious.

This hit me when I was going through the book of Genesis about a year ago. I was sitting down with Zac and Calvin, my two boys, and I was going through Genesis and I told them the story where Jesus came down from heaven in the Old Testament and he wrestled with the old man Jacob. And the boys thought this was funny – that Jesus is whooping up on an old man. I had never thought of it that way. It is kind of funny. Here’s an old guy with a walker and Jesus comes down – “boom” – just flies out of heaven, and it’s like he’s off the top turn buckle going to open a can on an old man in a walker. I thought, “That is kind of funny in a sick way.”

And so my son, Calvin, who’s four-and-a-half, is trying to figure out, “Did he do an arm bar or a triangle choke, or how did Jesus get Jacob to tap out?”

And I said, “Well they wrestled all night.”

And Calvin says, “Well that’s dumb. They didn’t need to do that. Jesus didn’t need to fight ‘em all night.”

I said, “Why?”

He said, “He should have just kicked him in the nuts.”

That’s what Calvin said. I look at Calvin. I said, “Buddy, Calvin, Jesus can’t kick anybody in the nuts. That’s a sin and Jesus doesn’t sin.”

He’s like, “He’s God. He can do whatever he wants.”

I’m like, “He’s a theologian, man.”

We’re debating, and I thought, “That is a pretty funny picture – Jesus coming down out of heaven, jump an old man and kicking him in the middle. That is kind of funny.” And so I started laughing, and the boys started laughing, and I thought, “You know, I wonder if this isn’t what Jesus meant when he said we need to be more like kids.”

Lighten up a little bit. Maybe come to the Bible and say, “There is a little bit of comedy in here,” ‘cause there are parts of the Bible, especially in the ministry of Jesus, that if you don’t understand it’s comedy, it makes no sense at all.

I’ll give you a couple of examples. Jesus says, “It’s easier for a camel to thread through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to heaven.” And all the religious types with the froed brows and the big books and no sense of humor who have never seen Chris Rock or Carlos Mencia, they’re all sitting there going, “Hmm. How do you get a camel through the eye of a needle?”

You don’t. That’s a Hebrew funny. That’s funny right there, right? You also don’t get an Escalade in your pocket. I mean that’s the point. It’s a funny. The whole Planck spec. “Hmm. How do you get a two-by-four on your head?”

Well unless you had an industrial accident, you don’t! That’s a joke, right?

And Jesus tells some jokes, right? I mean he calls Peter the what? The rock. Is Peter the rock? Peter goes out and denies Jesus to a teenage girl. That's not a rock. That's a wimp. It's a joke. We were supposed to laugh, not get a pulp out of it. I mean they totally missed the punch line. We're not supposed to have a papacy. We're supposed to have a chuckle. And you miss the jokes and sometimes you get too serious.

And some of us have this sort of Spock Jesus – this very logical one eyebrow. Just the comedy goes right by him. He's that kid, right?

Jesus also makes fun of people – religious people. I love this. He makes fun of some guys for tithing out of their spice rack. "Oh yeah, you guys gave me ten percent of the mint and you're jerks. I got enough mint. I'd like to have less jerks."

He looks at the Pharisees and he calls them a "bag of snakes", which they didn't think was funny. Everybody else did, 'cause nobody ever made fun of the Pharisees. They were the religious ones of the day – very serious. They were the fundamentalists with no fun.

Also, too, he tells them – and this is why they really got mad. They said, "Our father's Abraham."

He said, "No, Abraham's not your dad. Your mom shagged the devil."

(Laughter) That's funny, unless you're that guy. Then that's not funny at all.

And so here's what I learned from Jesus. What do you do with serious, devout, one eyebrow, furrowed brow, very intense, literal, no comedy, religious people? Make fun of 'em. Jesus did. That's biblical.

Jesus had a sense of humor. He's not Spock.

Secondly, Jesus was passionate.

When I was a little kid, there was a ghetto daycare near my house for all the people who couldn't afford a good daycare. This is not an endorsement. It's just an illustration. Hang in there. And at the ghetto daycare, mom would drop off the kids, and they would give 'em like NyQuil, and then the kids would just sort of sit there and drool and watch Scooby Doo all day until mom came and picked them up at the end of the day. And these kids were just sort of comatosed all day. And when I went to Sunday school, I seriously thought that maybe Jesus' mom was slipping him NyQuil, 'cause there was something seriously wrong with that kid, at least as I was instructed about him. I was told Jesus is always patient, always nice, always tolerant, always kind. Never gets mean. Never says an unkind word. Never hurts anybody's feelings. Never got too angry. Never got too sad. He's the lobotomized Lord. And I thought, "What a weird Jesus that is. I bet he'd never slide into second base to break up a double play. I bet you he'd never pitch inside to a kid who was crouching the plate. I bet you he'd never get frustrated, or happy, or cry, or sing, or nothing."

He just seemed dull. I mean they had his meds all figured out. This kid was just right flatline of emotion. And so I walked away from Jesus. Refused to go to church. Wouldn't have anything to do with church for very many years.

"Ah, Jesus is a dull, bore, passionless. I want to go live my life, pitch inside, slide into second, meet a cute girl, fall in love. Jesus has no passion. He doesn't appeal to me."

And then I started reading the Bible. And I didn't see the Jesus of the Thomas Kinkaid paintings or the Jesus meek and mild of the Wesley hymn. I saw a guy who kind of shocked me, to be honest with you.

If you want to spin your head around, just grab the gospel of Mark this week and read it. I'll take you through it quickly. You'll see some things about the passion of Jesus – the full, vibrant, emotional life of Jesus that may shock you.

He starts off in Chapter 1 saying, "Repent."

Do you see those guys on campus or at the mall with the big sandwich boards yelling at people? Jesus was one of those guys. "Repent."

And then he moves on and he tells these other guys, "Quit your jobs and follow me." And he tells a demon "shut up". And he heals a leper and says, "You shut up too."

Hmm, Chapter 1, that's an interesting way to start right there.

Chapter 2, Jesus picks a fight with Sunday school teachers. He does. He picks a fight with them, and he goes in and eats the holy bread. It would be the equivalent to you come here on Sunday morning to go cut up the communion bread 'cause you're helping out, and you find Jesus in there, and he's turned it all into sandwiches and he's eating it. You're like, "What are you going?"

And then he quotes from David. "David did it. I can do it. It's a sandwich."

You know? Hmm?

Chapter 3, he's angry and grieved.

Some of you say, "Well you can't be angry."

Yeah you can. You can be angry in a good way like Jesus.

And he also ignores his mom. His mom comes to him and they say, "Hey Jesus, your mom is here."

He says, "You know what? I'm busy right now."

What? I mean Hebrew – the Focus on the Hebrew Family flipped out. They were like, "Oh my gosh. Jesus is here. He's not nice to his mom. He's supposed to Focus on his Family and he's not."

You'll get that on the way home.

Additionally, Chapter 4, Jesus goes out and he rebukes the wind. I'm sure the Pantheists were freaking out. "Nature is God. You can't curse the wind. That's sacred. Noooo!"

Chapter 5, he kills 2,000 pigs. Can you imagine the animal right's activists? "Jesus killed the pigs. Oh no!"

I mean you could see like instead of like rainbows on the back of cars, you could see like bacon bumper stickers. "Jesus killed 2,000 pigs. I hope he turned them into bacon."

Anyways, he then moves on in Chapter 6. He offends people, but doesn't go to sensitivity training.

In Chapter 7 he says, "You guys are a bunch of hypocrites." Goes on a rant.

Chapter 8, I love. He spits on a handicap guy and calls Peter "Satan". That's different right there. That's different. That's different than the Jesus I was expecting.

"I'm blind."

(Spitting sound) "You're Satan."

That's different right there. Spits on a blind guy. Poor guy didn't even see it coming, if you think about it. That's not fair.

Chapter 9, he asks this great question. He asks, "How long do I have to put up with you?"

Some of you are going, "I'm married. I've heard that."

It's biblical. They're just quoting scripture. "How long do I have to put up with you?"

Chapter 10, he tells a rich guy, "You want to go to heaven? You've got to sell all your stuff and give it to the poor."

Prosperity preachers freaked out, I'm sure, about that.

Chapter 11, there's a funny one. He tells his guys, "Go into town and get that guy's donkey."

Guy comes out. "What are you doing taking my donkey?"

"Jesus needs it."

You think about this. Tonight after service, you go out to your car; there's 12 guys in sandals, big beards, around your car with a Slim Jim or a coat hanger. You're like, "What are you going?"

They said, "Oh, the Lord Jesus needs it. You'll be taking the bus home."

"Okie-dokie."

"It's not stealing. He owns everything."

"I got it. Okay."

And then he kills a tree. Can you imagine the environmentalists on this one? The protest – "Jesus is a tree murderer! He killed a fig tree."

And then he goes in and he goes to the temple, and the small business leaders are corrupt, and so he throws over their cash registers and he whips small business leaders.

Have you ever felt like doing that? Have you ever just felt like, "Somebody needs to whip this guy."? Have you ever had that kind of customer service where you're like, "Boy, I wish I was Jesus. I'd whip me some people right now!"

He whips some small business leaders.

And then in Chapter 12 he said, "You guys are wrong and you guys are going to hell. Very intolerant. Not very diverse."

Chapter 13 – very interesting. He says, "I will destroy the temple." It put the whole nation of Israel on heightened security alert. You had to take off your sandals before you boarded a camel. It was nuts.

And after running his guys around for three years casting out demons, doing miracles, preaching, teaching, he goes to the garden of Gethsemane to pray. It's late at night. His guys are tired. They take a little nap and he comes and rebukes them for sleeping.

What's my point? My point is this – sometimes we can become so familiar with the Jesus of the Thomas Kinkaid paintings, and the Jesus meek and mild of the Wesley hymns, and the drag queen Jesus with the perfectly feathered hair, that sometimes we cease to be astonished by the guy who's actually in our Bible and say, "My goodness. He lived a full human life with a full range of emotions. I don't need to fake it. I don't need to always say that to be angry is bad, or to be disappointed is bad, or to be frustrated or stressed is bad. All of those can be done in a way that is perfect and without sin, and that is exemplified by Jesus, including sorrow, hardship, grief, morning, loss, pain and bumner days."

Christians who are like, "I don't want to say that I'm hurting or struggling, because that'll make Jesus look bad." No it won't. Jesus had some very hard days.

Isaiah 53:3 prophesied 600, 700 years before his birth that he would be "despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering." Did Jesus really suffer? Was he Superman faking it or did he really suffer?

He did. How did he suffer? Financially he suffered. Jesus was what? Poor. 2 Corinthians 8:9 I think it is. He was poor. He was homeless. He was flat broke. Not only that, his buddy Judaist ripped him off. Not only that, he couldn't even pay his taxes. They came to him. They said, "Jesus, it's tax time."

He's like, "I've got nothing."

He didn't even have anything to pawn at the pawn shop. So he says, "Go fishing. You'll find a coin in a fish."

That's broke, right? When you go fishing hoping to find a credit card in a fish, you're officially broke and desperate, right? Jesus had financial troubles.

Well you say, "Yeah, but people really loved him and respect him."

Not everybody. Some people made horrible rumors. Others spit on him. Others accused him of things. He got drug into court on false charges.

And you know what? Jesus Christ was physically abused. It says that a mob of men surrounded him and punched him. Beat him up. Pulled out his beard. That he was flogged and the flesh was removed off his back and his legs. I mean Jesus was physically abused.

You had lies told about you? You ever been physically abused? You ever had anybody rip you off? You ever been flat broke and unable to pay your bills?

Jesus, Jesus Christ, God, who became a man, fully relates, because he too has been there.

Some of you say, "Yeah, but at least he had religious people around him, and I'm sure they prayed for him and loved him."

No, they kept jacking with him. They'd come to argue and debate and try to make fun of him and sport of him and trick him and make him into a public spectacle. The religious people were generally some of the worst.

You say, "Well at least he had his friends."

Oh yeah, his friends were ducky. They turned their back on him. They deny him. Peter at one moment said, "You are the Christ," and then tells him what to do. Peter denies him. Judaist betrays him. Thomas doubts him. These are not good friends. They all walk away. Garden of Gethsemane, sweating blood on his way to the cross. His friends don't even stay up to pray for him or comfort him.

I don't know about you. Maybe you've leaned on your friends and they have totally failed. They have not been there when you needed them. They betrayed you. They disowned you. They misunderstood you. They didn't support you. They ignored you. That happened to Jesus.

You say, "Well at least he had his family."

Well his family was no help at all. There was one scene in the gospels where Jesus' mother and two brothers go to pick him up for what reason? They think he's (whistles) lost his mind. They say, "Jesus has lost it. He's gone bipolar. He thinks he's Jesus."

You'll get that on the way home too.

And what's amazing, they want to check him into a psych ward. Get him an evaluation. Get him treatment. Get him medication. That would be the equivalent today.

Jesus' mother who was conceived by the miracle of the Holy Spirit said, "My son, he's lost it."

His brothers didn't believe in him.

Have you ever had family members who didn't support you? Didn't stand with you? Didn't believe in you? Didn't encourage you? Jesus did.

You say, "Yeah, but at least Jesus had God the Father, and he could pray to God to Father, and God the Father would answer his prayer."

Not always. Garden of Gethsemane, the cross impending, Jesus is sweating blood. He says, "Father, if there is any way to save our people without me being crucified, separated from you, bleeding and dying, let's do that. Take this cup – this cup of suffering from me." And then he says, "But Father, not my will, your will be done." He ultimately submits himself to the Father.

So in a very real sense, that prayer of Jesus was not answered entirely as Jesus asked. In one sense it was – the Father’s will was done. But in one sense, the cup of suffering passing him by, that was not answered.

Some of you may be here tonight saying, “You know what? I’m broke. I’m suffering. I’m hurting. My family is not good. My friends are not helpful. My life is painful. What does Jesus have for me?”

Well I’ll tell ya, it goes further than that. Jesus also bled and Jesus also died. I mean this is unbelievable.

I don’t know about you. Lately, I feel weak, not strong. I feel sort of burned out, not fired up. I don’t want to die. I’m not suicidal, but there are days when I really want to go to heaven. Have you ever had one of those days? I don’t want to hear about any more people that were molested. I don’t want to hear about any more women that were battered. I don’t want to hear about any more men that are addicted. I don’t want to make any more hospital visits. I don’t want to preach at any more funerals. I don’t want to hold any more people who are crying ‘cause they’ve sinned or have been sinned against. I don’t want to see any more people cripple or blind or lame. I want to see the world the way it was supposed to be before we messed it up with sin. I want to go be with Jesus. I want to see the blind see. I want to see the lame walk. I want to see the deaf hear. I want Jesus to wipe all the tears from everybody’s eyes. I want Jesus to make all things new. Boy, that’s what I want to see.

You know, this last week – I’ll tell you a painful story. There’s a young man in this church. And he, like so many of you, is a young man that loved Jesus, wanted to get married, make babies, serve Jesus, do the Mars Hill dude route to dudeness. That was his goal. And he had a little problem – rash type thing. Didn’t think it was a big deal. The doctor didn’t think it was a big deal. It went on for another examination. Come to find, it’s leukemia – cancer. For months he’s battling cancer – fighting. He’s got a girl he loves with all his heart. He just wants to be married. He wants to live happily ever after. Like Jesus, he’s young. He’s strong. He’s vibrant. His whole life is before him. He’s been fighting for months.

It’s a beautiful love story. He and his wife, they actually got married in the hospital. He’s been struggling. Pastors, his family, and his friends have devoted a lot of time. His loyal, faithful wife who married him in the hospital – it’s a beautiful story – exceedingly faithful to him.

I heard that he wasn’t doing well, so this last Wednesday night, I went there just to speak to him and pray for him. I walked in and there he is – young and strong. But he’s on a ventilator, and he’s on medication and feeding tubes, and he’s really swollen, and he’s in a very bad condition. And I walked in, and there’s his mom, and there’s his wife, and there’s his friends, and everybody who loves him, and they’re all weeping and they’re praying for him.

And I tell you Mars Hill, I heard Jesus speak to me, and he said, “I’ve been there.” I just lost it. I thought, “I cannot believe that God would come to this world. All I want to do is get out. I can’t believe that God would let people treat him the way we treated him. I can’t believe that God would let his family and friends disrespect him the way they disrespected him. I can’t believe God would let his enemies beat his body and take his life. And I can’t believe that one of his final words would be ‘Father, forgive them.’”

I mean Jesus Christ is unlike anyone else. There is no religion that is like Christianity, because there is no person who is like Jesus. Everything that we want to avoid is what Jesus chose for himself. Why? Why would he do that?

I’ll end with Hebrews 4:14 through 16.

You could pray for that young man’s wife. He passed away. We have to do a funeral. The only comfort I have is that Jesus Christ has suffered, died, rose, and that he knew Jesus, and Jesus knew him, and that Jesus was able to be with him and understand and sympathize and take his hand and make all things new.

God is not a guy that stands back and says, “Try harder. Do better. Good luck. I’m not getting into that mess. You’ve made it. You fix it.”

Our God is completely other. That’s what it means to be holy. Our God comes into human history and gets his hands bloody and suffers and dies and lives a full human life with the full range of human emotions. And Jesus does that because he desperately loves us. And because of that, Jesus Christ is the one when we are struggling, when we are hurting, when we are failing, when we are dying – he is the only one who can help us, because no other religion offers any other God who has ever been there and gone through to the other side.

Hebrews 4 says it this way. “Therefore, since we have a great high priest” – and Jesus is great – “who has gone through the heavens,” – he is now on the other side of the cross and empty tomb – “Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.”

I know that some of you are here today and you are Christians. You were raised in a Christian home where at one point perhaps you made a commitment to Jesus, and your faith is falling out of your hands. It’s hard to hold onto the faith that you once professed. You’re tempted to sin. Your life is hard. You’re flat broke. You’re in constant pain. Someone you love has died. Life has become arguist, difficult, harsh, painful. Your family, your friends, even the religious people that you came with, aren’t as much help as they should be, and it doesn’t seem like God is answering your prayers either. And the faith that you once professed is slipping through your fingers. You say, “How can that be prevented?”

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness.”

Do you feel weak today? Not strong like a victorious conqueror. Weak – like you’re burned out, and you’re busted, and you’re tired, and you’re frustrated, and you’re sick of it, and you don’t want to commit suicide, but you sure look forward to heaven.

Jesus can sympathize with us in our weakness. Do you know Jesus has been tired, hungry? He wept. He suffered. He had pain. He bled. He died. He

buried people that he loved.

In moments of weakness, sometimes we feel like we should run from Jesus because he'll be disappointed. No, we should run to Jesus because he can sympathize. Isn't that wonderful – that when you need Jesus most, you don't get disappointment, you get sympathy.

He goes on to say, "But we have one who has been tempted in every way, as we are – yet was without sin."

Jesus never did sin, but he really was tempted.

You say, "Yeah, but he wasn't tempted like me."

He was tempted in every way as we are. You want to eat too much and be a glutton. You want to drink too much and be a drunkard. You want to take something that's not yours and be a thief. You want to convolute the truth and be a liar. You want to be a self-righteous, religious, pharisaical hypocrite who is judgmental of all people and kind to very few, other than the few that are like you. If you're filled with pride and arrogance, which is the original sin and got Satan kicked out of heaven; if you're tempted to these sorts of things, including sexual sin – some of you say, "Now Mark, Jesus wasn't sexually tempted."

Well of course he was. A thirty-something-year-old single man who had women who adored him – you don't think he ever wanted the comfort of a woman? You don't think he ever got tired of going to bed by himself? You don't think that he didn't once want to have intimate relations with a woman? He was tempted.

And you need to distinguish between temptation and sin. They are two totally different things. If you don't get this distinction, Satan will absolutely destroy your conscience. Temptation is where we are presented with an opportunity to sin. Sin is when we act on it. Jesus was tempted, but he didn't sin. Opportunity came, but he didn't avail himself to it. You and I will constantly be tempted.

Some of you say, "How can I no longer be tempted?"

As long as you are on this earth, you will be tempted. The answer is you must resist temptation and sin. You must say "no" to sin and "yes" to God, and that's what Jesus did every time in thought, word and deed. He can sympathize with us in our weakness, and he can empathize with us in our temptation. He absolutely gets it.

You say, "Well how can I live this life with Jesus?"

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Jesus is back on his throne, and then in one hand he has grace. In the other hand he has mercy. And what he says is this – "Come to me. All you are heavy and burdened, and I'll give you mercy and I'll give you grace, and that will be your rest."

So many of you are trying so hard to impress Jesus. What you need is to run to him for mercy – to forgive you, sympathize with you in your weakness, empathize with you in your temptation. That doesn't excuse your sin, but it means that he will also give grace that will forgive you of your sin and will empower and enable you to say "no" to sin and "yes" to him so that you can live the life of Jesus – the life that does suffer. The life that is passionate. The life that does believe there is a time to laugh and there is a time to weep. The full range of humanity, without being a faker; without being like Spock; without being like the self-righteous, furrowed brow, religious hypocrites who said everything was fine, even when it wasn't. But being fully human, as Jesus was fully human, and receiving from him grace and mercy and sympathy and empathy to live a life that says "no" to sin, as he continually said "no" to sin.

At this point, we invite you – I invite you Jesus. If you're not a Christian, go to Jesus tonight and receive mercy and grace. Be saved by the mercy and grace of Jesus. He alone can give it because of his sinless life, his substitutionary death, his literal resurrection. He lived the life we couldn't live. He died the death we should have died. He rose to give forgiveness, grace and mercy that we didn't deserve. There is no one like Jesus. No one.

If you're here and you're a Christian and you say, "I'm feeling very tempted, but I don't want to run to Jesus 'cause I'm embarrassed," no, run to Jesus because he sympathizes and he empathizes and he gives mercy and he gives grace. And when you're ready, you can take communion if you're a Christian remembering Jesus' body and blood through which come grace and mercy. Give of your tithes and offerings, and then raise your voices to sing and celebrate Jesus – that he may not save us from the pain of this world, but he will indeed save us through it, and so let's run to him with confidence. Let's run to him with confidence that there is grace and mercy, and that it is only to be found in Jesus who alone can sympathize with the weak and empathize with the tempted.

I'll pray.

Lord Jesus, I pray now that you would enable my friends to respond to you – that those who are weak would run to you for grace and mercy; that those who are tempted would run to you for grace and mercy. Jesus, that those who don't know you would now know that you sympathize with their weakness and you empathize with their temptation – that you have been where they are; that you understand; that you can relate; that you will take their hand; that you will say, "My yolk is easy. My burden is light. Let me come along side of you."

Jesus, I am shocked that you would come into this world. None of us would have chosen that – to have friends betray, deny, abandon you; to have family dishonor, disown and disrespect you; to have enemies beat you and curse you and mock you and kill you–

Jesus you were man of laughter, man of sorrows, man of passion you were a man of sobriety, may you redeem us and make us fully human and like you we ask for that grace and mercy —

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<http://marshall.com/media/vintagejesus/how-human-was-jesus>