Exploring and Proclaiming the Depths of Scripture
FOCAL POINT MINISTRIES

The Supremacy of Christ-Part 3
The Son of God
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We got a new family vehicle about three months ago. And, oh, it's not my metallic blue Porsche Carrera, but it is pretty impressive. I mean, it's got all the goodies and gadgets and neat lines and paint jobs, brand spanking new, and it's just, it's really neat. Matter of fact, that first week that you have the new car, the new car smell, just taking it in is, I mean, it's exciting. It's fun. You walk up to the car and you step back every now and then just to get a look at it, you know. This is a nice-looking car. And then you get in and you grab the new leather-wrapped steering wheel and you take a deep breath of that new car smell and just look around at everything. I mean, it's great for about a month.

And then it just becomes the family car. You are more interested in popping in and getting to where you're going, and you don't spend a lot of time stepping back and looking at it. You know, you're just not impressed anymore. It's not that it's not the same impressive vehicle. It's the same impressive vehicle. And there's lots of unexplored cup holders and things in it that you haven't ever seen, but you're not interested in exploring it anymore because you've found the cup holder you like, and you use the things that you use, and it just doesn't have the same appeal anymore.

Unfortunately, our experience with new cars is a lot like our Christian life, unfortunately. We step into this thing called the Christian life, and at first, don't you remember, everything is so impressive. I mean, the concepts of God loving us so much that He would send His Son into the world is a mind-boggling kind of truth that resonates and usually provokes a lot of real heartfelt gratitude and some real profound worship. I mean, we think about the concepts of justification and having our sin wiped away because of what Jesus did on a cross. Or we ponder the fact that God and His eternal glory would put on human flesh and come and live among us. I mean, that first verse that we learn and really begin to grapple with as kids, that God so loved us that He gave His one and only Son. I mean, we start recognizing at a certain point when God opens our eyes, that's an amazing truth.

But then after a few years, it just becomes common. And it's unfortunate because what we're doing is we're taking the most sacred and lofty and important truths of the universe, and because we're not careful to stand back and ponder them, and there's facets to explore that we don't touch, we start to treat them as mundane and common. And we don't any longer really marvel at the fact, as John 1:14 says, that the Word, He put on flesh and He dwelt among us. And John says He walked among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the one and only, filled with grace and truth. And we say, oh yeah, I know about that incarnation and that's Christmas and then got the resurrection and the, yeah, all that. I understand.

Boy, it would be very unfortunate for us to not only miss the excitement and the joy that comes with knowing that in a profound way, it would be tragic if we offended God by not treating what is sacred as sacred. As a matter of fact, in the Old Testament, God said, I'm so frustrated with my people gathering together and talking about these things, but not being impressed with these things, that He at one point said, after the Babylonian captivity to His people, I just wish someone would shut the doors. I just, I don't even want them singing songs to Me anymore. It would be a terrible thing for us to fulfill the words of Christ that they honor Me with their lips. You know the rest of that, right? But their hearts, far from Me.

It's a danger that we can't afford to fall into. We really can't afford to look at the truths as presented, for instance, in Hebrews chapter 1 and yawn our way through them and say, yeah, we know all about that. We may know about it, but today we need to let God rattle our heart just a little bit with how profound and significant these truths are.

We saw last week an argument beginning to form for us that didn't make a lot of sense to us, that Jesus is better than angels. And we said most of us aren't tempted to think that He weren't. Of course, Jesus is greater than angels. But last week, we elevated our view of angels. We said, well, wait a minute, they are pretty remarkable. Well, as He gets into the argument, the first thing He does to show that Christ is superior to angels is He starts to talk about the role that He plays in the universe, and He specifically begins to discuss the name that He has.

Take a look again at verse number 4. I know we touched on it last week, but it sets us up for verses 5 and 6, where I'd like to camp today. Take a look at it again, as He says that He became as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs. And we already saw, again, if you'd go back even further to the beginning of the book of Hebrews, that He said in verse number 2 that God has spoken to us in His Son, who He appointed heir of all things, through whom He made the universe. The Son, He's the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's being, and He sustains all things by His powerful word.

I mean, just that description of this person is impressive, and we lose it because we say we already know that. But if you think about a guy with sandals growing up in a carpenter's shop saying these things, affirming these things, and writers saying, yeah, that's who He is, that's amazing. Because if we were to take people that we know that walk around in Bermuda shorts and Hawaiian shirts and wear sandals and said, yeah, that guy is claiming to be God, we would stop and take notice.

If your next-door neighbor, think of your neighbor, think of the one on the left, okay, he's out cutting his lawn one day and he comes up to you and says, oh, by the way, I just wanted to let you know I created grass. What? Yeah, I was out cutting my grass. I just want to tell you I created grass. Really? Yeah, and trees too. Oh, and by the way, I created you. Uh, okay. Oh, and not only that, I sustain everything by the word of my power. Oh, and by the way, I am the judge of the universe. One day you and your wife and your kids, they're all going to bow down to me, and you will give an account to your whole life to me, and I'll determine where you go when you die. I don't think you'd say, oh, thanks, Fred, have a nice day. You'd be impressed with the claim. Even if you didn't believe it, you'd be impressed with the claim.

As C.S. Lewis said, you can't dismiss that. You can't be neutral. You can't treat that as trivial. Either you have to say you're crazy, you're a nut, you got a demon, something's wrong with you, or perhaps it's true. Now, if your neighbor were walking through the halls of Mission Hospital, taking quadriplegics out of their beds and making them run down the hallways, we'd start to maybe get a view, maybe my neighbor's not crazy. If he was born in a place that was predicted by God, say Community Hospital in Long Beach, and all the sacred writings had predicted that for years, and they talked about his ethnic background, and his social class, and his status, and the role, and the names that he would have, and all of a sudden now we're starting to say, wow, could God really dwell next door to me, and wear Bermuda shorts, and Hawaiian shirts? That is an impressive claim.

And the claim of Hebrews chapter 1 is God has done so. He has put on human flesh and He bears the name, a special name, a definition of a name that is exclusive. Take a look at verse number 5. It

says, to which of the angels has God ever said, you are my Son, today I've become your Father, or again, I will be His Father and He will be my Son.

Now stop right there. A lot of us again, we're yawning through this going, oh yeah, I know. No, maybe you don't know. As a matter of fact, I'm not sure you do know. Keep your finger here and turn with me, if you would, to Job chapter 1. This may come as a bit of a shock to you because here is a claim made in Hebrews chapter 1 that's put this way. I'll read it again. For to which of the angels did God ever say, you are my Son? Or in the bottom of verse 5, I'm going to be your Father and you're going to be my Son.

We touched on this, or at least we referenced this scene in Job chapter 1. Look at verse number 6. And I want you to see something we didn't perhaps call attention to last week. And that is that as the description of heaven here is made in verse number 6, it says, one day the angels came to present themselves before Yahweh, and Satan also came with them. Okay, now go back to verse 6, the beginning of it. One day the angels. Do you have a little tiny letter there next to that and some reference to a footnote? Okay, put your glasses on and look carefully at the small print. What does it say? Sons of God. Does it say that in the margin of your Bible? As a matter of fact, the Hebrew phrase is as clear as it can possibly be. Ben Elohim, sons of God. The sons of God came to present themselves.

And you can put a reference in the margin. Job chapter 38, we did reference this one last week, verse number 7, the morning stars sang together, the Ben Elohim shouted for joy. The sons of God shouted for joy. Now, wait a minute. In Hebrews chapter 1, it says, to whom did God ever say, you are my Son? And the second reference He quotes there from 2 Samuel 7, He says, I will be His Father and He will be my Son. Now, wait a minute. The answer is not as clear as we thought it was. God has been calling angels His son for a long, long time. The sons of God. That's one of their titles.

And it's not all that unusual because here we have a claim that to which of the angels did God ever say you are my Son? And then we open up the rest of the book of Hebrews and we find that we're referred to as God's sons, right? Hebrews chapter 12. Jot this reference down, verse number 7. Endure hardship in your life. God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? Confused yet? How about on the Sermon on the Mount? Jesus said, blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God.

So whatever we get from this quotation, it's not that no one else in the Bible has ever been called a son of God. There's plenty of people. There are myriads of angels called sons of God. And by the way, I think when you prayed this morning or last night, you probably referred to God as your Father. What are you assuming there? You fancy yourself a son or daughter of God, right? So what are we talking about?

Back to the text, Hebrews chapter 1. What you need to understand clearly about this passage is that He is referencing two passages of Scripture that every Sabbath school graduate knows. They're very understandable, clear, and they're put in a context that everybody says, I know exactly what He's talking about.

The first one is Psalm chapter 2, verse number 7. And you'll see that it's in your Bible. It's footnoted. Even a Bible that doesn't have many notes in it at all will at least let you know that that quotation comes from Psalm chapter 2, verse number 7. You need to go read it sometime. This was

the regal ceremony of enthroning an Israeli king. God's anointed one. He would be called a son of God, and he would be there ruling and reigning over Israel, and God would fight for him, and you better be good to the son, because if you don't kiss the son, he might be mad, and I'll get involved in Israel's armies, and I'll go wipe all you out, so you better listen to the king of Israel. This was something used in the enthronement ceremony for an earthly king in Israel.

The second quotation, what does your footnote say? Where's that one come from? I quoted it already. 2 Samuel chapter 7. And Sunday school grads should go ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, 2 Samuel chapter 7. We've talked a lot about that in our Roman study on Thursday nights. That is the passage and the chapter of the Davidic covenant. And the Davidic covenant was that God would promise that one day the ultimate king would come through David's line. As a matter of fact, specifically and historically, the descendant of David, which everyone assumed initially would be Solomon, would be called a son of God, and God Himself would say, I'm your Father, and he's going to build the temple, and if he sins, God's going to correct him, and he won't be cast out.

But you know what? Immediately, people started to say, wait a minute, that's pretty lofty language. That's pretty idealistic language. And you know what? Solomon didn't seem to fit that bill. And we saw it, didn't we, if you were with us in our Thursday night study, that later on in the book of Samuel, all of a sudden now, Solomon is not the guy. We're looking for somebody else. Where is the Son of God? Where is the ultimate descendant of David? Where is this person that will sit on the throne of David? And if you're with us in our study, you remember we looked at Isaiah chapter 9. Do you remember that? Isaiah chapter 9 was hundreds of years after Solomon, and they started referring to the fact that where's the Son of David? Where's this great son that's going to be born with these great appellations of being the mighty God and everlasting Father? And He is going to sit on David's throne and rule and He will be the Son of God, but He will be the descendant of David. Where's that ultimate king?

Well, the ultimate king was clearly revealed when Gabriel shows up in Luke chapter 1 and speaks to a girl in Nazareth named Mary and says, you're going to have a child, but he's not going to be conceived by your fiancé. He's going to be conceived by the Holy Spirit. Oh, and by the way, he's going to be the Son. And he's going to sit on the throne of his father, David, and he's going to rule the nations with a scepter in his hand. And Gabriel says, I just want to make it clear, this is the 2 Samuel 7 guy. And he's not going to be born by, but he's going to, Holy Spirit, what? Yeah, he's going to be a Son of God. As a matter of fact, he's going to be called God with us. Hmm.

The concept and expectation of the Messiah and the ultimate king in Israel, as he'll go on to say, and we'll deal with it later in Hebrews chapter 1, is going to be the one who's going to have all the regal power to rule over the nations. He will be the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic king. And you know what? The Bible's really clear. He won't just be a man. He'll be conceived by the Spirit. He will be God in sandals.

Number one on your outline, let's shut this down and take a little time at least to try and appreciate it. Let's try and fully appreciate it. Number one, let's fully appreciate the concept that the Son is God. Let's fully appreciate, number one, the Son who is God. He is not just representing God as some poor reflection of divinity on the throne of Israel. He is, look again at verse number 2, He is the Son who is appointed heir of all things through whom God made the universe. The Son, verse 3, the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustains all things by His powerful word. He will be the ultimate king, the ultimate leader.

And you know what? No angel's ever been given the old Davidic enthronement ceremony and called the King of kings and Lord of lords. No angel's had that. Oh, they've been delegated authority and power, as we saw last week, to run parts of the country and parts of the world. That's true. But we've never had the Davidic promises applied to an angel. And we've never had the Davidic promises ultimately applied to any person.

And so in that sense, let's put some bullet points under number one. Let's just at least say this. Number one, little bullet point A, if you will. Not son. Whatever the Son Jesus is, He's not son like angels are sons of God. We've already seen that. And we've already established whatever it means, He's not a son like we're sons of God. Oh, we use the same nomenclature, the same wording, but it's not the same. This is different. This is something unique.

And just by way of definition and appreciating that He really is God, let's go through a few other things that He's not in this passage. And we'll have to hop outside of verses 5 and 6, but we'll see it everywhere. Let's put a third bullet point down. Because one of the problems with the terminology son is I start thinking there's a time when I have a son and a time when I don't, especially when I talk about today you're my son or beginning a son or bringing my one and only, my firstborn, verse 6, into the world. I start thinking to myself there was a time when I don't have them. Because I got two sons, and I can remember, sometimes unfortunately fondly, when I didn't have sons, right? There was a time I had them and a time I didn't. And son, that seems to think birth and bringing. So that means temporal beginning. But that's not what we mean in this text.

As a matter of fact, let's put the bullet point down, and then we'll try to prove it if we can from the passage. Number three bullet point, not son, as in had a beginning, okay?

Take a look again at verse number 2, and then we're going to look at verse number 10 in Hebrews chapter 1. In verse number 2, let's get it. He is the Son who is appointed heir of all things. Now, here's the key phrase, underline it. Through whom He made the universe. That's all over the place in the Bible. John chapter 1, verse 1. Remember that? In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God. Remember that whole thing? Remember the next verse? It said, everything was made through Him, and there is nothing made that has been made that the Son didn't make. He made everything. Hmm. He's the creator of all things. He supersedes material reality. He is not brought into the world like my son was brought into the world. He made the world. So He doesn't have a temporal beginning.

And that whole in the beginning thing was really clear because He goes in to talk about that Genesis 1:1 terminology down there in verse number 10. Drop down to verse number 10 in Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 1, verse 10. He also says, here's our phrase, in the beginning, O Lord, You laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They're gonna perish, but You remain. They will wear out like a garment, but You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment, they're gonna be changed, but You remain the same and Your years will never end.

And that's a theme we pick up on later in the book of Hebrews. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, the writer says. What's the point? He's eternal. Son, people trip over that, especially that verse in verse number 6. He brings His firstborn into the world. We think, wow, that's when He became a son. There's a doctrine in theology that we need to keep clear and intact. It's called the eternal sonship of Christ. That He has been God's Son for all eternity, and the Father has been the Father for all eternity. But He was brought and established on the throne of David at a certain time when Gabriel says, here He comes, the inauguration of the great king. And in that day, Psalm 2, 2

Samuel 7, applied to Him. Did He become the Son that day? No, He didn't. He's been the Son for all time. But He is the Son who is eternal.

And every time we run into this concept in the Gospels, Jesus is saying it over and over and over again. Remember? He got all the Pharisees mad when He said before Abraham was born, I am. Remember that? Kind of a mysterious way to talk. And it says, the Bible says, they picked up stones to stone Him. Why? Because you don't say that. You're not even 40 years old. You're saying you existed before Abraham. Who says that kind of thing? The eternal Son, who comes from the Father. Scripture says it everywhere. The passage I just read, 1 John 1:1 and 1:2, in the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God. He was with God in the beginning, and through Him all things were made. Without Him, nothing was made that has been made. Son does not mean He had a start. He had a beginning.

Let's look at another one that He's not. Put this one down, bullet point number four. He's not son, quote-unquote, as in less than the Father. Because I got this thing about being the father of a seven- and eight-year-old. I kind of feel better than them, right? They're inferior to me. They're just little kids. I know more. I'm better than them in a sense because I'm bigger and they're small and I'm large. That's not a good example, but they're young and I'm old and they're inexperienced and I'm experienced and they're not all that wise and I'm at least wiser. I make all these comparisons and think in many senses you're inferior to me. Okay, that's just natural. You don't say it out loud, but you think the same thing I do, right? Those little kids, they're not on even par here. When we think of son, we think, well, maybe that's the case.

But the Bible's really clear. As a matter of fact, look again, we can't overstate verse number 3. The Son is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of God's being. He is equal with the Father in His quality, His power, His worth. Everything about the Son, except for the role that He plays, is on even par with the Father. Son does not mean inferior to the Father.

And if there's any doubt about that, the Father obviously is God. Look at verse number 8. Don't be confused about this at all. And the first, what, one, two, three, four, five, six words are critical in verse number 8. But about the Son, He says, here's another quote from the Scripture about what God thinks of the Son. Are you ready? But about the Son, He says, your throne, two words, what? O God will last forever and ever. And righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You've loved righteousness. You've hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. You are the great king. But notice how He's called there. The Son is called God in verse number 8. Can't get around that.

What about the Son? The Father says, your throne, O God, will last forever and ever. I guess if you're going to call the Son God, you can't say He's inferior to the Father who's God. Oh, He does play a subjective role in the Gospels. He is someone who has, Philippians 2, willingly laid aside some of the independent prerogatives of His power. Obviously so. But the Son is not inferior to the Father. And there are people that will come knocking on your door saying that to you until they try to convince you. He's not the same. Not on par with the Father. The Bible's really clear. He's a Son, and that does not mean less than the Father.

How about this one? Fifthly, important for us, a very popular, growing in popularity these days, a misunderstanding of the Son. Here it comes. Let's put it down. Not Son, as in Father in disguise. Because there's a view that all the Son is, is the Father, kind of putting on the Son hat and coming down to die for our sins. And as a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit thing, same thing. The Son just

puts on the Spirit hat and goes out and becomes the Holy Spirit now. This is called historically modalism.

That God just kind of plays Himself out in three different modes. We're not modalists. The Bible does not teach that God wears three hats. And I know that helps us understand God, that maybe I can understand it if it's one person playing three roles in a really interesting drama, but that's not how He's presented in Scripture. And all you've got to do is look at verse number 5 and the wording and the pronouns there. Look at verse 5 again. You'll see this consistently in Scripture. For to which of the angels did God ever say, you are my Son. Today I've become your Father. That sounds like you are a different person than Me because there's a pronoun in the first person and a pronoun in the second person. And unless God is schizophrenic, I don't understand that, unless we're talking about two different persons.

Now that's confusing because you've just said all throughout the Old Testament there's only one God. Now all of a sudden we have Jesus here called God by the Father and He's supposed to be recognized as God by us, not inferior to the Father, and all of a sudden now, they're talking to each other like they're separate entities. What's the deal?

And if you want to throw the Spirit in, let's just confuse this even further. John chapter 14, all the way through chapter 16, He begins to talk about the fact, and here's a good reference for it if you want to jot one down, and we can look at several in that discussion, John chapter 14, verse 16 and 17. Here's Jesus speaking. I will ask the Father, and He will give you another. He's going to be the Counselor, and He's going to be with you. He's going to be called the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Truth. I'm going to ask the Father, Jesus tells His disciples, and He's going to send another. He's the Spirit, and He's going to live in you. He's never going to forsake you. He's going to be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth.

Now, unless you're playing some fancy word games here, you must be talking about the fact that you are not the Father, and the Father is not the Spirit, and you are not the Spirit either. Therefore, what do you got? Three separate persons. So that adds up to three, right? Not really. And that's a problem. It's a problem for our little brains trying to comprehend this God who is one essence but exists in three persons. And if that's a problem for you, welcome to the club. It's been a problem for people for centuries. But we can't deny it just because it's tough for us to understand.

And today you will find, go to church after church after church after church, and more and more churches today than have for centuries are now saying they believe in modalism. Modalism, they believe that God is just one person who puts on three different hats. Not the way the Bible presents God. And we got to say the historic position of understanding what the Scripture teaches is we have one God existing in three persons, and we need to stand back and appreciate that. And if that sounds pretty confusing and I can't fully comprehend that, I think that's a good thing because I don't think you want to fully comprehend God. If you got a God you can fully comprehend, He's probably not the God I want to sign up for. Be good if He was just a little, just a cut above your understanding.

So let us at least say we all stand in awe of the mystery of a triune God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, existing in all time as eternal Father, eternal Son, eternal Spirit. Strange thing, but certainly the God of the Bible. He's not the Son like the angels are the sons of God. He's not the Son like we are the sons of God. He's not the Son as in having a beginning at a one day. He's not the Son in terms of less than the Father, and He's not the Son as in He's just wearing a different hat than the Father. And then He goes and puts on the Spirit hat later.

Fully appreciate that the Son is God. Now, all this talk, go back again, if you would, to Hebrews chapter 1, if you're not already there. Look at verses 5 and 6. There's a lot of discussion, particularly in verse number 5, about Father and Son. And, I mean, we could camp there and there and focus on the Son because that's certainly the thrust of this passage, but this passage is going somewhere. As a matter of fact, look to where it heads in chapter 2, verse number 14. Eventually you're going to get around to this word, and the word is that we've got the Son who was brought into the world and sent by the Father, and there's this great love that the Father has for the Son and the great majesty and credentials that the Son has. Better recognize He's Son, but not like you, and He's Son not like angels, He's better than all of that.

But what you need to recognize is He's come, not just to show off His regal power, He's come to share in the flesh and blood that the children of Abraham have. Verse 14, since the children, that is the children of Abraham, have flesh and blood, so He too, the Son, He shared in their humanity so that, here's the real grave words in this text, by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is the devil.

Now again, that's old hat for you and I. Oh, I learned that in Sunday school as a kid. Jesus died for us. God sent Him to die for us. Don't let that pass by without standing back going, wow, that's a big deal. As a matter of fact, the whole purpose of the taking on of human form is that He would come and represent us on a cross one day. And that's major. As a matter of fact, to say that God loved us so much that He would send His Son to die, it ought to rattle us a little bit.

And what you need to know about this concept, let's go to number two on your outline, is we should at least say, you know, it's good for us to regularly ponder that, that we have a Father who sacrifices His own Son. And it ought to be, as people said on the patio to me after the first service, it ought to be a bit of a stumbling block to us. This is bizarre. And you need to recognize this, that God has given us the experience of father-child, parent-child, so that we could have some sense of what this is all about. The Father sacrifices His Son.

And you've got to know, God could have created children out of the crevice of a rock somewhere, right? There could be the child-producing rock out somewhere in Barstow, and all the kids come out of the crevice of the rock. Or you could spit on the ground, and all of a sudden grows up a child. God could have done it in a million different ways, but instead He created this weird familial relationship of parent-child. And He says, I want you to experience a little bit of that. Because when you experience a little bit of that, then you can learn to appreciate just a little bit of what it was like for the Father to give His Son as a sacrifice to die so that He could take care of death for us.

Came home after work last night, long day, 12 hours at the office. I'm pulling in, and sure enough, there's chaos at my house. My seven-year-old had been in the kitchen and sliced his finger, and it was bleeding, man, big time. And his little seven-year-old mind was just going 100 miles an hour. He is screaming, and he is saying, I'm gonna die, and I've lost all my blood. He's asking, Mom, how much blood do I have in my body? I've lost a lot. I can see my bone. I'm not gonna make it. Uh, you know, give my bears to my brother. He's checking out. He's sure it's over for him.

And so I come in and I set my briefcase down and I come in and try and scurry around and help this whole situation, and he's just devastated, man. He's sure that it is over, and he's never seen that much red liquid come out of his body before. And it's, we got napkins, we're wrapping it, we're trying to clean it, he's going crazy. And of course it was kind of, you know, you know, dad, oh,

you're not going to die. It's going to be okay. And you're going to work through this. And you're not, you know, got plenty of blood left. And you're going to be fine.

But you know, in all of that, I thought to myself, this is really hard for him. And it's really hard for me. I don't like seeing my kid bleed. Oh, I know he's going to recover, and it's just a cut on his finger. But what if his fears were true? What if he was bleeding to death in my kitchen? What if it was that he was cut and bleeding and going to die? All of a sudden now, I'm thinking every fiber of my being as dad cries out against it. No, you will not die. And if he were losing consciousness and his eyes were rolling back in his head, dad would do anything to keep him alive. Because that's how God has wired a father to love his son. And there's no chance in the world I'm not going to plow through walls and drive a million miles an hour to get the kid the help he needs so that he doesn't die.

Now, it's hard to watch my kid bleed. It would be even harder to watch him bleed to the point of death. It would be harder still to think that I had something to do with it. Can you imagine that thought? That I was the one causing him to bleed and causing him to die? I mean, that's the part we ought to stumble over. And if, by the way, it's hard for us to recognize that this is a relationship of Father and Son, and that relationship of Father and Son should mean that Father does everything to keep the Son alive and healthy and exalted, and all of a sudden now we learn the whole point of being a Son incarnate is so that the Father can crush Him, putting Him to death so that He might offer Him as a guilt offering on behalf of us, now it becomes unfathomable. How in the world is that possible?

And if it's hard for you to picture in this spiritual invisible relationship, then go to Genesis 22 for just a few minutes with me and let's show you that God wanted you to get it from the very beginning as He started this nation. And He started a nation so that He might bring through that nation a person who would be the Davidic king, the Lamb of God. And it all started with Abraham. And He said, I want to make sure that you all get it, that it's inscribed in Scripture and every generation following Abraham knows what I'm talking about.

And it starts with these words in Genesis chapter 22, verse number 1. Sometime later, God tested Abraham. And He said to Abraham, Abraham. And he said, here I am. What do you need? I'm here for You, God. I love You. I want to do whatever it is You want me to do. You remember this text, don't you? And God says to Abraham, take your son. By the way, I just created that relationship for you so that you'd know a little bit about my relationship with Jesus, my Son. But I want you now to take your son, your only son, Isaac. Remember him? The child of promise. The son whom you love. I mean, He couldn't drive it in any deeper. The human desire for Isaac to succeed was what Abraham lived for. Oh, take that son, your only son, the son whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah, which, by the way, poetically, would become the temple mount in years to come. And I want you to sacrifice Isaac there.

And I want you to sacrifice him, not in some ceremony or throwing some water on him or putting flowers in front of him and dedicating him to God. And it isn't about being a good parent and raising a good kid. Here's what I want you to do, Abraham. I want you to burn him on the top of that mountain. Kill him. Can you imagine that? How you'd clean your ears out or however God's revealing this and you're going to go, I need that in triplicate before I ever even get up. I can't even, I don't even understand what You're saying. My son, my only son, Isaac, the son whom I love, You want me to do what?

See, because Abraham knew what it was like to sacrifice. We bring a check and we say, "God, we love you. Thanks for providing. Here's a check." We put it in a bag and we give it to God. They took from their flocks animals, and they took those animals. They said, "Well, here's a good one, and it's expensive, and it's monetary, and it's important—but a sacrifice to you, God." I'm going to lay it on this big rock altar. It's a barbecue, and I'm going to put that animal on there. This expensive animal, this costly animal that I could feed my family with and do lots of things and trade and barter with—I'm going to slit its throat right here and barbecue that thing, a burnt offering, so I don't eat any of it. I'm just giving it to God. He knew what that was like. He'd done it several times. And God pulls this one on him: "Take your son, your only son, Isaac—the son that you love—and I want you to kill him."

Now, I don't know how the conversation went with Sarah that morning, but they pack up, and Abraham says, "Okay, I love you, God. I want to be obedient. I want to do what you want. I want to do it for you if that's what you're asking for." And in some bizarre, perverted way in his mind, he says, "I guess this is what I'm supposed to do. So I'm going to do it." And God's going, "This is exactly what I want you to do."

So early the next morning, Abraham gets up. He saddles his donkey. He takes with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. And they cut enough wood for the burnt offering, and they set out for the place that God had told them about. On the third day Abraham looked up and he saw the place in the distance. And he said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkeys while I and the boy go over there. We're going to worship, and then we will come back to you."

The New Testament gives us a little insight that Abraham was so trusting God that somehow—even if God made him kill his son—God would maybe resurrect him from the dead. Something. But if God, the God I love, wants me to do that, okay. I will do it.

Verse 6: Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and he placed it on his son Isaac. He himself carried the fire and the knife, and the two of them went on together. And Isaac spoke up. Can you imagine how this must have ripped at Abraham's heart? "Father." "Yes, my son." "I see the fire. I see the wood. I'm carrying the wood. But where's the lamb? We don't have an animal. Where's the lamb for the burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." What? I don't get it.

He had no idea that Abraham's intention was to obey God because he loved God to the point of sacrificing his own son. And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place, verse 9, that God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and he arranged the wood on it. And he bound his son Isaac—with a gaping mouth, you can imagine. Isaac's going, "What are you doing, Dad?" And he took him bound and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and he took his knife out of the sheath, and he raised it over his head, and he was ready to slay his son.

That just grates against everything in my heart and yours that you think is good and right. Something's majorly wrong with that picture. What? Human sacrifice? This good God from heaven who's supposed to love everybody? I mean, doesn't he want him to raise a good and healthy son and just create this great family with he and Sarah now? No. Kill him. Don't just kill him. Watch him burn on a pile of rocks. What? There should be nothing in us at all that connects with this text. It's abhorrent. To kill my son would be unthinkable—perverse. He's got his hand with a knife over his son.

And the angel of the Lord shows up, verse 11, calls out from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. “Do not lay a hand on the boy. Don’t do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.” And Abraham looked up, and there in the thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and he took the ram and he sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place Yahweh Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of Yahweh it will be provided.”

That was inscribed as a morbid picture of God calling a father to sacrifice a son, and it grates against everything that’s good and right in our hearts to show you that you and I would one day stand on the receiving end of the benefit of the only way—as we’ll learn in Hebrews chapter 2—the only way that God could keep us from hell. And God says, “I just want you to realize that this is what my love is all about for you.”

That there was no other way, as we’ll learn in chapter 2, for me to redeem you. So what I’m willing to do is what I made Abraham go through—and that is, I’m willing to sacrifice my own Son and to put him to death, Isaiah 53 says, so that your sin can be nailed to that cross so that you don’t get drop-kicked into the lake of fire one day. You can come and be blessed in my kingdom. Yet you’re sinners. You’ve done wrong, but you’ll be forgiven—completely forgiven, white as snow—because I provided a lamb.

Which, by the way, is the chorus of heaven right now. The Scripture’s really clear. Revelation chapter 5 says they’re all standing around the Lamb and saying, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive honor and glory and riches and wealth and power and praise,” because he was willing to give up his life.

And that’s one thing. But to view it for just a few minutes from the Father’s perspective—do you see why God commands us to take elements on a regular basis as a part of the church to say, “Don’t ever forget what this was all about”? Now all of a sudden I read the words, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.” Don’t trifle with that. Don’t make that mundane or common. It cost him everything.

There’s only one response. It’s found in verse 6 of Hebrews chapter 1. If you have any sense of the big picture—that the Son, the majestic Son, the credentialed Son, was brought into the world, God in human form, for one purpose: to redeem mankind by his death—you ought to recognize, and the angels knew it, you’d better fall down before that person and worship him.

Scripture says, “And again, when God brings his prototokos—his heir of all things, the one who has the birthright—into the world, he says, ‘Let all the angels worship him.’ Let God’s angels worship this person.”

And that’s how it all started. With an announcement from Gabriel that he was the Davidic king, that he would be the one—God in human form—or as the angel said, he shall be called Emmanuel, God with us. And you know what? The bottom line is, you all ought to sit there and fall down at his feet, because he is God in human form and he will redeem you from your sins. And the angels came and showed up to a bunch of shepherds, and they praised and glorified God and brought worship, this text says, to Jesus—a little baby.

And if that weren't enough, God wanted to make sure you understood who he was. Then, by the time he was a toddler, he brought these three Persian kings—or at least a whole group, a band of kings with three different gifts—to come and worship a little toddler in a little dusty village. And if that weren't enough, every time we turn the pages of the Gospels we have people falling down before him and calling him Lord—Kurios—God.

Thomas says, "My Lord and my God." And if that sounds bizarre, it ought to. If that sounds a bit blasphemous to your friends, it should. Because if this isn't God, we've got a big problem, because the whole Ten Commandments thing was really big on the fact that you're supposed to worship the only true God—one God. You shouldn't worship or serve anybody else.

And Jesus affirmed that truth when he got tempted in Matthew chapter 4 and the devil said, "Hey, just come down and worship me and I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world." What did Jesus say? "Worship and serve the Lord only." That's it. It's only one person to worship. Worship God.

When Barnabas and Paul were there and they had people bowing down, wanting to sacrifice to them, they were repulsed by that and said, "No. We worship God."

When the angels in Revelation 19 and 22 are bowed down to by the apostle John because he's overwhelmed with the majesty, power, and glory of the angels, the angels say, "Don't do it. Worship God."

It is blasphemous to worship anyone but God. And the Scripture says the Father calls the angels to worship the Son. Oh—in a few verses you're going to call him God in verse 8. And how does Jesus respond to that? Let me show you. Turn to John chapter 5. There are several passages—Matthew 14, John 9, John 20. Several that show Jesus saying, "Yes, this is proper. This is right." But I want to show you it's not just that he accepts worship—we could look at dozens of passages that show that—it's that he requires it.

And if he is not God, it's blasphemy at the highest order. Look at chapter 5. Drop down to verse 21. "For just as," John 5:21, "the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it." That sounds pretty arrogant to me. Unless, of course, you're God in the flesh, existing eternally in a triune fellowship for all time, and now you've come to take on human form.

Moreover, verse 22: "The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son." Jesus says, "I'm going to judge everybody." Verse 23—purpose clause—"that all may honor the Son." Two words. Underline them. "Just as they honor the Father." Does that sound like blasphemy? It ought to, unless we're dealing with God. Honor the Son just like you honor the Father.

What are you trying to say? "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."

Here's the thing: there is no other group in all of the world but you and me—as a part of a larger organization called the church, Christians, real Christians—no other group in all the world that's going to worship Jesus. Nobody's going to do it. Jewish people aren't going to worship Jesus. Worshipers in the Jewish faith—not going to do it. Muslims—Islam—not going to worship Jesus. Oh, he may be a prophet. We may say, "Oh, he's a spokesman of God at one point." But they're not going to worship Jesus. Hindus aren't going to worship Jesus. Buddhists aren't going to worship

Jesus. Non-Christians aren't going to worship Jesus. You know what makes us distinctively Christian? We worship Jesus. We believe that he is God in human form, and that if we do not honor him and we do not worship him, we're not worshiping the Father. We have no choice in the matter.

And when you understand something of what the Father has sacrificed, and something of what the Son has been obedient to—obedient to the point of death on the cross—it's not hard to sit back and to do what we're commanded to do. And that is to honor the Son just like we honor the Father. As a matter of fact, it's going on right now in heaven. Scripture's so clear. I quoted it briefly. Let me read it to you. Revelation chapter 5. He looks up. He sees many angels. This is verses 11 through 14. It's worth looking at. Let's turn there.

Last passage. Revelation chapter 5.

Reminds me of that 100-year-old Isaac Watts hymn. Do you remember that? *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*? One of the lines in that song is just so appropriate looking at what we've just looked at this morning.

The upshot in Isaac Watts' hymn—it's 100 years old now—he says this: "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all."

I mean, all you've got to do is ponder what's been done here. All you've got to do is really think about what this table represents. And now all of a sudden you can't help but say it demands everything from me.

And that's what's going on in heaven right now. Verse 11: I looked up, John says, and I saw the voice of many angels numbering thousands upon thousands and ten thousands times ten thousand, and they encircled the throne with the four living creatures and the elders. And with a loud voice they sang this song: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain"—that's Jesus we're talking about—"to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise."

And then every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them singing, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb"—both of them, notice—"be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever." And the four bizarre living angelic creatures said, "That's right, right on, amen." And the twenty-four elders fell down and they worshiped.

If worship to you is a few scant songs on Sunday we just kind of work our way through and kind of connect by the third song, then man, we've got a lot of catching up to do. We better worship the Son. If you don't worship the Son, you're not worshiping the Father.

I don't know what it's going to take. It's going to take you looking for some lyrics on some good music that you put in your car, and you're not just listening to the stupid talk radio all day, and you're singing on the way home to the Son, the worthy Lamb who was slain.

Or you're spending time in your prayer life not just saying, "Oh God, give me this and give me that, and bless this plan and bless that plan," but you're really spending significant time when your head is bowed saying, "I praise you, Jesus, worthy Lamb who was slain. You deserve my attention, my power, my wealth, my praise." Time for us to worship the Son. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, and my all.