

## Jesus: the giver of eternal life

### 1. The Message of Jesus

- The Christian message is very polarising message
    - It's not a feel good message
    - It's good news – yes!
    - But it's not a message that is designed to make everyone feel warm and happy
  
  - You know those stories they have at the end of the evening news
    - You've just had 29 mins of news telling us how messed up the world is
    - Then they finish with a feel good story that makes everyone go 'Ahhh'
      - Cute baby gorilla / giraffe / tiger born at the zoo
      - Lost dog hitchhikes 3000km home to its owner
      - 2 yo boy breaking world record for chin ups
  
    - Whole purpose is to help the viewing audience finish their news experience on a positive note... leaving you with this warm fuzzy feeling
  
  - Well the Christian message is NOT like that
    - It's confronting
    - It's not a message that leaves you feeling warm and fuzzy
  - It's forces you to reflect on your own standing before God and on what basis you can stand before him
    - It challenges you to weigh up some big truths in your life and be honest with yourself
    - And that's confronting
    - And because it's confronting it polarises people in their response
      - Some don't like what they are confronted with and so reject the Christian message
      - Others see the reality of what it exposes and are transformed by it
- And we see the confronting nature of the Christian message no more clearly than in the last verse of the passage we read this morning – v36
- *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever **rejects** the Son **will not** see life, for God's **wrath** remains on him."*
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- On the one hand it's wonderful message because it's promising eternal life to those who believe in Jesus
    - But on the other hand it's a message that's confronting

- There are a number of things that are confronting aren't there?
- First is ... if a person is to have eternal life they need to believe in Jesus
  - When the Bible talks about believing in Jesus it's not just referring to an intellectual agreement that
    - Believing in Jesus is the right thing to do
    - Believing in Jesus is makes sense
    - Believing in Jesus is worth a try
  - It means trusting him, listening to him, obeying him, following him
  - It means giving your life over to him and his authority
- Now that's not popular because we're a very anti-authoritarian culture
  - No-one likes other people telling us what to do
- So the first thing that we are confronted with is having to put our faith in Christ and give our life over to him and his authority
- And if you choose to reject Jesus authority and refuse to put your trust in him then v36 says you will not see life > you will not have eternal life
  - That is, you won't experience life to the full as God intended it to be
  - It means you're going to miss out on the best life can offer
  - And it won't just be a fleeting missing out on a special moment in life
    - Like missing your baby being born
    - Missing a great party
    - They're merely moments in time
  - It's missing out on the best of life that will last for eternity
- Second thing that's confronting about this verse is, if you choose not to believe in Jesus, not only do you miss out on eternal life ... but God's wrath remains on you
  - That's in your face isn't it?
  - Because
    - People don't like the idea of God being angry
    - God's not meant to be angry
    - He's meant to love me and take care of me and provide for me ... he's not meant to be angry with me
    - Who wants a God that's angry and wrathful ... that just makes him look like a monster
  - The other reason it's in your face is because it says there is something about us that deserve God's wrath

- There is something about us that means we're not as morally good as we like to think we are that means we deserve God's judgment
- I don't know about you, but I hate it when I realise / I'm told that I'm not as good as I think I am
  - Happens quite a bit!
    - Criticised for something you did or said > hurts
    - Have your yearly review with your boss > don't get the promotion or bonus you were expecting because you didn't meet expectations > knocks the wind out of your sails
    - Get rejected in a relationship > breaks your heart
- Message of the Bible unashamedly says ...
  - There's something about you that means God's wrath against you is justified
  - It doesn't hold back > doesn't guild the lily
  - You and I are people who have a problem and the message of the gospel confronts us with that truth front on
- And notice that for those who reject Jesus... God's wrath **remains** on them
  - That is, we're not born morally neutral and we choose to believe or not believe
  - No ... as a human race ... we all by nature reject God and want have authority over our **own** life
    - Therefore, the default position is ... until you believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour... God's wrath is **already** on you
    - And then if you consciously choose to reject Jesus ... it remains on you
- But if you're willing to humble yourself
  - Recognise your own moral failures
  - Accept that you **cannot** and **have not** loved God and loved others as you should
  - Then ... putting your faith in the Son means you can and will have eternal life
  - The wrath of God you deserve won't fall on you... because it already fell on Jesus at the cross
- **Application**
- If you're confronted by that ... then that's good

- Because it means you understand the Christian message
- We need to understand there is a problem with us and this world that needs resolving if we're going to understand and appreciate God's amazing grace to us in Jesus Christ
- Others of course are apathetic to the Christian message
  - They just don't care or don't think it matters for them
  - It might be good for others... but it's not really relevant to me
  - If that's you ... you haven't yet understood the message
- I met a guy recently > chatting about our work > I tell him I pastor this church > we have a good chat about faith and God and Jesus and our great need for him
  - While he said he wasn't really sure whether to believe or not > he liked the idea of his kids going to a church school and going to church to learn all the morals that Christianity teaches
- Jesus didn't come into this world and go to the cross and endure the wrath of God to teach us how to be morally better people
  - He came so that you and I can move from death to life by believing in his name
  - Sure ... the way a Christian lives is important > very important
  - But it comes as a response to all that Christ has done for you at the cross ... not because being a good person makes you right with God
- This guy I was talking to ... he hasn't got it yet
  - He hasn't understood the confronting message of the gospel
  - He hasn't grasped that he's sinner who's facing the wrath of God which will remain on him while he continues to sit on the fence
  - He hasn't understood that he needs to put his trust in Jesus ... if he's going to move from facing eternal judgment to having eternal life
- If you understand the gospel ... you can't be agnostic
  - You can't be apathetic about it
  - The gospel is not a like the warm fuzzy item at the end of the news you can smile and say, "that's nice"
  - You need to see it as good news ... because it's the one and only means of you having eternal life and being spared the wrath of God for your sin

## 2. The Authority of Jesus

- Now that's pretty full on

- What's going to convince you to accept Jesus testimony about eternal life and the wrath of God and put your faith in him?
- What authority does Jesus have to come and say these things?
- What authority does Jesus have that's going to help you and I realise that what Jesus is saying is the truth and we need to take him seriously?
  
- That's the role of John the Baptist in this section of scripture
  - John the Baptist's role has always been to prepare people for and point people to Jesus
  - And in this interim period of history while Jesus is starting off his ministry and John's is winding down ... the Baptist continues to point people to Jesus
  - And in these verses in particular he spells out the authority of Jesus
  
- John and his disciples are out baptising
  - Jesus and his disciples are doing the same thing
  - Some ppl are going to JTB > but evidently more and more people are going to Jesus to be baptised
  - And John the Baptists disciples have got their noses out of joint
- And they come to John and say
  - "Everyone's leaving our church and started going to his church
  - "Attendance down, offertory is down > what you doing to do about it?"
  
- John says
  - "You forget the context > you forget he has authority"
  - "You forget that I am from the earth and he is from above"
  - "He must increase, I must decrease"
  - "You are forgetting who he is and where he is from"
  
- **Illustration – Traffic Reporter**
- Each night if you watch the Channel 10 news, or tune into the radio... you'll hear the excited voice of Vic Lorusso bringing you the traffic report from a helicopter up in the sky somewhere over Sydney
  - If you're on your way home and Vic comes on the radio and tells you the M5 is a car park and it's best to take Stoney Creek Road ... then you listen to him don't you
  
- Why?
  - Traffic report comes from above > he sees the whole road > he sees the beginning and the end > therefore he has authority

- You listen to him because he can see everything because his testimony comes from above
- John the Baptist is saying in these verses that Jesus message ought to be received because he is the man from above
  - He sees the whole road > he sees the whole of eternity > the beginning and the end
  - So he is able to tell you with authority which way is the best way to go
- We hear the message of the gospel and we don't like what Jesus has to say about faith and wrath and judgment and commitment
  - But we forget the context > we forget he comes from above
  - And so when we hear what Jesus says > and we say we don't like it and we're going to reject it
  - It's like saying "what does Vic Lo Russo know? I'm going to head to the M5 anyway"
- So Jesus has the authority to bring us this message because he is from above > he knows the full story of eternity
- And John the Baptist goes on to outline more of Jesus credentials for his authority in v34-35
  - Jesus is from God
  - Because he is from God he speaks the words of God
    - Like the Minister for Foreign Affairs has authority when they go overseas and meet with foreign leaders, because they're sent from the Prime Minister > the words they say come from the PM himself
  - In addition ... God has given Jesus the Spirit without limit
    - We saw this at his baptism > the HS come upon Jesus as he began his earthly ministry
    - In the OT the HS was given in measured doses to kings and prophets
    - But Jesus has the Spirit without limit
  - So Jesus message about eternal life, wrath, commitment, faith in him... have authority because he comes from God and brings the word of God because he has the Spirit of God
  - Finally, in v35 Jesus is the son of the Father who has placed everything in his hands
    - All creation, all judgment, all forgiveness, all life ... is in Jesus hands
    - He has all that > and so he has all authority

- Now when a witness is called in a court case ... they not only bring clarity about the truth ... but they also bring authority
  - For a witness to be admissible they cannot be bringing hear-say
  - Must have seen or heard the thing in question
- Jesus doesn't bring hear-say ... he brings the truth and he comes with authority because he has been with and heard God
  - He speaks the words of God
- When it comes to the meaning and direction in life ... every religious teacher and philosopher is giving hearsay
  - Not Jesus > he brings inside information
- If you want to get insight into a family ... what do you do?
  - You ask a member of the family
- If you want to get insight into life you ask the creator of life
  - Jesus is the creator and author
- When I was at school I quite enjoyed English ... but I really struggled with poetry
  - I remember reading a John Donne sonnet and we read it and the teacher asked us what it meant
  - We're giving our interpretation ... and then the teacher tells us we completely missed the point
    - All about sex and his sexual desire
    - And I'm thinking ... what drugs are you smoking to get all that
- Its often the case with poetry ... the meaning is open to interpretation
  - But say John Donne were to walk in the room ... he could tell us what it means
  - Our teacher would be saying ... it means this
  - John Donne would say "No it doesn't what are you talking about? I wrote it ... I know ... it means this"
  - He can do that with complete authority ... because he's the author ...he's the creator
- Jesus has authority because he is the creator > everything is in his hands
- Because Jesus is
  - From above
  - Son of the Father

- Has the Spirit without limit
  - He therefore he comes with authority
- He doesn't just bring words **about** God ... he brings words **of** God
- That means his words are different to
  - Muhammad's words or
  - Buddha or Confucius
  - Aristotle > Marx > Nietzsche > Kant
  - Kayne West or John Lennon
- His words have authority

### 3. The Response to Jesus

- So what do we do with this message about eternal life and wrath and commitment and faith that Jesus brings with such authority
- How do receive the message of Jesus into your life
  - If you're convinced of the message
  - If you are convicted of Jesus authority ... how do you take on what Jesus has to offer?
- v33 - *The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful (NIV)*
  - Better translation - *Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true (ESV)*
  - To receive the testimony of Jesus is to set your seal on what is true
- What does that means?
  - Rich and powerful people used to use a seal
  - Drip wax on a document and push their seal into it, sometimes crafted into a signet ring or on a separate stamp
  - And the way they signed off on contract or signed off a letter was to put their seal on it
  - It's like you or I signing on the dotted line of your mortgage or a formal letter
  - It means you've bound yourself to that thing or those words
- What's it mean to set your seal to Jesus Christ?
- It doesn't mean ...
  - "I'm going to give him a shot"
  - "I'm going to give him a try and see if he helps me"
- What it means to set your seal on Jesus is to say
  - "Here's my life... I hand it over"



- "I owe you my life, I'm submitting to your leadership now"
- "I set my seal ... I bind myself to do anything you say"
- "I'm convinced anything you've said in your word I will do"
  
- When people hear that they say
  - "I'm scared of that. He might ask me to do things I don't want to do"
  - Of course he's going to ask you to do things you don't want to do
  - That's the whole point of having someone in authority
    - Abraham didn't want to sacrifice Isaac
    - Moses didn't want to go and speak to Pharaoh
    - Jesus didn't want to go to the cross
  - But what they all did, every one of them ... is they submitted to the authority of the one who is from above
  
- Anyone with any sense of self-awareness knows that when they look into their past, they will see all types of failures, short-comings and mistakes
- Made all sorts of bad decisions
  - Poor priorities > foolishness > impulses > all sorts of things
  - And you know ... there's no evidence that you're over it and you're not going to do them again in the future
  
- What do you do?
  - You set your seal on Jesus Christ
  - I know if I bind myself to Jesus Christ ... he's going to ask me to do things I don't want to do ... things that don't make sense at the time, things I don't like at the time ... but I know the best thing is to submit myself to his authority and the truth of his message
  - Why? Because he is from above and he sees the whole road of eternity
- We say ... I **know** the best thing for me is to going to listen to you because you're the man in the helicopter and I'm just the one down here on the road
  - You're the one from above, you bring the words of God
  
- Some people are going to hear this and think
  - "I was raised in a religious home and I was given a lot of rules ... and it sounds like that's what you're asking me to commit to?"
  - And I was crushed with guilt because I was always failing ... and I don't want to go back to that"
  
- Friends, if that's you ... then you still don't get it

- Because when you set your seal to Jesus and everything he says ... that includes the gospel
- And the gospel says you're not saved by your performance or your ability to keep the rules and be a good religious person
- Rather you're saved and accepted into the family of God only because of the free grace that comes to you through Jesus death on the cross in your place
- He's done **everything** for you > he's paid the debt you **know** you deserve to pay
  
- There will be others of you here today who will say ...
  - "Yeah ... I've set my seal to Jesus"
  - "I bound myself to him long ago"
  - "I've received his message > I believe it is true"
- But maybe for you ... the authority of Jesus it yet to permeate every part of your life
  - Why is it, if you've accepted the message of Jesus, that his authority as the one from above is not fully shaping and transforming your life?
- It's because setting your seal is a once off thing that you do when you are converted
  - But after that you need to continually renew it
- I told Liana I loved her when we got married nearly 20 years ago
  - I set my seal to her > I bound myself to her > Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> 1995
  - But its not good if she tells me she loves me and I say
    - "I already told you that on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> 1995. What do you expect from me? I already set my seal to you?"
- She would be quite right to say ... "well I'd like to hear you re-affirm that from time to time"
  
- And maybe the authority of Jesus and this words is not shaping and transforming every area of your life, because you're not letting the word of God dwell in you richly
  - Maybe the truth ... the message that Jesus brings with all authority from above is not sinking deep into your soul
- If Jesus and his words of truth about eternal life and wrath and faith and commitment are going to permeate your life ... you need to read and pray them into your heart so they can have their transforming effect on you
  
- Are you feeding on Jesus words of truth?
  - Are you part of a growth group where you can do that with others

- Are you leading your family in pointing them to Jesus through the word of God?
- Are you continually setting your seal to the testimony of Jesus Christ?
- If not ... or until you do ...
  - you're not going to fully understand the testimony of Jesus
  - you're certainly not going to allow him to have the authority over your life that he deserves and you need
  
- Message of the gospel is a confronting message
  - We may not like the truths about us it reveals
- But it's a message that comes from the one who has full authority who is from above
- He sees the whole road > he sees eternity
- He knows the truth and wants us to save us so we can share in eternity with him
- So set your seal to Jesus
  - Receive his testimony ... and allow him to have the full authority over your life that you need him to have and you know he deserves

**PRAY**