

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: Christ the King

Outline:

- Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)
- Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.
- Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)
- Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)
- Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)***
- Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.
- Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.
- Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.
- Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.
- Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.
- Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.
- Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.
- Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

A key emphasis in Christ’s ministry as seen in Matthew 8-9 is the issue of LORDSHIP AUTHORITY! We see it in chapter 8 when the centurion recognized Christ’s authority to just say the word and heal his servant from a distance. We see it there in Christ having direct authority over the winds and waves of the sea.

Christ’s miracles over nature were unique. The apostles were allowed by God to do sign-miracles in relation to sickness and demons, but Christ alone did miracles over nature. Yes, in the OT a few prophets like Moses and Elijah on occasion were used in reference to miracles over nature, but in each case they did it second hand in dependence upon God. In contrast Jesus did it FIRSTHAND - in first person as if He Himself was doing it directly. That is unique and for this reason the disciples marveled saying, *“Who can this be that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”* (Mt. 8:27)

Jesus as the Messiah was unique in His unprecedented miracle working power. Jesus' miracles are called SIGNS consistently throughout the book of John. They were sign-miracles pointing to the reality of WHO He is as the divine-human Messiah.

Slide # 2

John 20:30–31 (NKJV)

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs [*miracles*] in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

As we continue on into Matthew 9 the authority theme continues. Today in our study we will see Christ's unique authority to directly forgive sins proven by His ability to heal physically. Again, this combination is completely unique to Christ's ministry.

The parallel passages to our study in Matt. 9:1-8 are found in Mark 2:3-12 and Luke 5:18-26.

Matthew 9:1–8 (NKJV)

1 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

In thematic context Jesus had crossed over from Capernaum to the region of Gadara where He had cast thousands of demons out of 2 demon possessed men. The demons immediately then entered into a herd of pigs which then en masse promptly committed suicide by running violently over a steep precipice into the sea.

Then the people from the city came out and begged Jesus to leave their region. And guess what – Jesus left. That's what we have here in Matt. 9:1. When Jesus is not welcome somewhere He leaves! He does not force His way in. He wants to be wanted! He invites people to come to Him, but He doesn't force it.

Slide # 3

Hebrews 10:26 (NKJV)

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

There is no hope for those who sin willfully in rejecting the plain truth that is made obvious to them. A saving faith response **WELCOMES** the truth and desires to receive Christ.

Slide # 4

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV)

13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you **welcomed it** not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

In contrast when the truth of Christ is **rejected** Christ goes away. Sometimes the very worst thing that can happen is that God simply allows people to have their own rebel way. In Romans 1 three times it is stated that God gives depraved rebels over to their own devices which is the wrath of God on display (cf. Rom. 1:18, 24, 26, 28).

So being rejected by the **Gadarenes** Christ then crossed over the Sea of Galilee once again and came to His own city of Capernaum.

Slide # 5



Early in His ministry Christ returned to His hometown of Nazareth and preached on the Messianic text of Isaiah 61. Closing the book He declared, *“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”* But instead of receiving Him as the promised Messiah, the hometown people of Nazareth tried to kill Him by seeking to throw Him over a hill, but miraculous Jesus passed through the midst of them and went on His way as seen in Luke 4:16-30.

Matthew 4:17 says, ***“And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum”***. Having been rejected at Nazareth Jesus then made Capernaum His **“own city”** – which is to say His ministry headquarters.

Again, we see when Jesus was rejected in Nazareth, He simply moved on to another town (namely Capernaum) and made it His “own city”. Jesus only stays where He is welcome!

In arriving back at Capernaum the following event transpired...

2 Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.”

Many think this scene very possibly took place at Peter’s house in Capernaum. Mark adds these details...

Slide # 6

Mark 2:3–4 (NKJV)

3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by **four** men.

4 And when they could not come near Him because of the **crowd**, they **uncovered the roof** where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

Because of the density of the crowd these four friends proceeded to go to the upper level of the house - make an opening to lower the paralyzed man down in front of Jesus.

When it says Jesus “**saw their faith**” it undoubtedly speaks to the faith of them all including that of the paralytic. Sin is forgiven only on the basis of FAITH – so this would indicate that certainly the paralytic also had faith.

Faith and forgiveness are consistently connected in the Scripture. The basis of how we receive God’s forgiveness in salvation is on the basis of faith. After we are believers if we fall into sin we remain believers. We don’t have to come to faith all over again. Rather we then need to get right in our walk through confession as seen in 1 John 1:9. Faith tied to forgiveness of all our sins relates to salvation. And that is what is in view here.

Slide # 7

Acts 10:43 (ESV)

43 To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who **believes** in him receives **forgiveness** of sins through his name.”

It was on the basis of FAITH that Jesus pronounced this man forgiven of sins. Some have tried to make the case that this man’s physical ailment was a result of some specific sin in his life and for that reason he was a paralytic. However, the text does not say this.

It is true that sometimes physical maladies can be because of specific sin in the life of a believer but that is not always the case (cf. 1 Cor. 11:29-30; 1 Tim. 5:23; 1 Jn. 5:14).

As seen in John 9:2-3 sometimes physical ailments are not because of any personal sin, but simply because we live in a fallen world. We don't always know the reason why people get sick or have infirmities.

In this fallen world we have two major related sin problems. The entire human race is breaking down physically because of the effects of sin traced back Adam and Eve (cf. Gen. 2:17; 3:16-19). It is a general condition that effects the whole of humanity. Secondly, we all come with a spiritual problem in which because of sin we are cut off from the life of God and are therefore in need of forgiveness. This is our greatest need.

This is what is in view here in Matthew 9. This is forgiveness related to salvation based on faith. Jesus addressed the man's spiritual need first and foremost. Again, the greatest need is that of forgiveness of sins.

When Jesus said, "**Son, be of good cheer**" the words "good cheer" could be translated "**take courage**" or "**take heart**" (cf. Mt. 9:2; 22; 14:27; Mk. 6:50; 10:49; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). This was meant to encourage and strengthen him spiritually. Properly understood nothing is more important than being forgiven of sin. Nothing is more encouraging and strengthening than knowing all your sins have been forgiven. No matter what else happens this is ultimately what matters in the end.

Thus, Jesus FIRST and foremost did for this man the ultimate and most important thing – on the basis of his faith Jesus forgave him of all his sins.

Someone has said that "**forgiven**" is the most special word in the English language. The Greek word translated "**forgive**" (apiemi) means "**to send away**". In the common vernacular it means "**to let it go**".

God is omniscient, knowing all things past, present, future, real, and potential. So when the Bible says in forgiveness God will remember our sins no more the sense is that "*He choses not to remember them in the sense that in His divine accounting He no longer reckons them to our account.*" (Murray J. Harris). They are no longer on our record. God has let it go – never to be held against us again.

Slide # 8

Psalm 103:12 (NKJV)

12 As far as the east is from the west, **So far has He removed** our transgressions from us.

Colossians 2:13–14 (NKJV)

13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, **having forgiven you all trespasses,**

14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, **having nailed it to the cross.**

3 And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, “This Man blasphemes!”

When Jesus declared the paralytic’s sins forgiven the scribes immediately drew some theological conclusions – namely that this was blasphemy. They were all over this as they were there with a critical spirit just looking for any “dirt” they could find on Jesus.

Clearly, they did not understand this as merely expressing forgiveness in the sense of personal forgiveness in which one person forgives another for some wrongdoing (cf. Eph. 4:32). Rather, they understood this as Jesus making a blanket statement forgiving this man of all his sins (plural) such as God forgives a believer in salvation. This was a blanket release from all his sins! Only God can do this! This is God’s territory. This is His prerogative – which is why they considered this to be blasphemy.

Blasphemy denotes irreverent speech that is offensive to God – in this case that which defames or demeans God. In the OT the penalty for blasphemy was the death penalty (cf. Lev. 24:10-16; Num. 15:30-31).

Slide # 9**Leviticus 24:16 (NKJV)**

16 And whoever **blasphemes** the name of the LORD shall surely be **put to death.** All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he **blasphemes** the name of the LORD, he shall be **put to death.**

So this was a deadly serious charge. And we don’t have to wonder why they considered this to be blasphemy because in the cross reference in Mark 2 it is plainly stated:

Slide # 10**Mark 2:6–7 (NKJV)****6** And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,**7** “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? **Who can forgive sins but God alone?**”

Understand that the scribes were the theological experts of the day. They knew the Bible better than anyone. They copied and interpreted the Scriptures. They were scholars who viewed themselves as the guardians of the Jewish faith.

They knew that the OT Scriptures taught that ultimately people are accountable to God alone and that ultimately He alone can forgive sins. And give them credit – in this premise they were right (cf. Micah 7:19; Ps. 32:1-2; Isa. 44:22; 55:6-7).

Slide # 11**Isaiah 43:25 (NKJV)****25** “**I, even I, am He who** blots out your transgressions **for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.**”**Jeremiah 31:34 (NKJV)****34** No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For **I will forgive** their iniquity, and **their sin I will remember no more.**”

So these scribes had it right. Only God can in the ultimate sense forgive sins. This makes it very clear that they understood Jesus was presuming to act as God in declaring this paralytic's sins forgiven.

You see the problem is that they did not recognize Jesus as God come in the flesh. They did not recognize Him as “Immanuel” which means “**God with us**” (Mt. 1:23). Thus, when Jesus made this statement declaring sins forgiven, they considered it to be sacrilegious blasphemy! In their minds Jesus was a mere man acting like He was God. He was claiming to do what only God can ultimately do!

And that would be blasphemy except for one thing – Jesus is indeed God. And as God He does have the authority to forgive sins. Indeed, this is God's prerogative, but what they failed to see is that Jesus as the divine-human Messiah was indeed God doing what only God can do.

4 But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?”

Once again we see an emphasis on the deity of Christ. Only God knows the thoughts and motives of what is going on in the heart of other people. Ultimately we don’t even fully know our own hearts. Again, this is God’s territory!

Slide # 12

Jeremiah 17:9–10 (NKJV)

9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked;

Who can know it?

10 **I, the LORD**, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

1 Corinthians 2:11 (NKJV)

11 For **what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man** which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

Slide # 13

John 2:24–25 (NKJV)

24 But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men,

25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, **for He knew what was in man.**

Hebrews 4:13 (NKJV)

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him** to whom we must give account.

Jesus as the divine-human Messiah knew exactly what they were thinking and He knew their thoughts were evil. When it says Christ called them out for thinking evil in their hearts the word evil (Gk. *ponera*) means worthless, bad, malignant, or wicked. They weren’t simply ignorant or confused. Christ accused them of evil reasoning for which they were accountable.

It is evil to accuse Jesus of sin – yea the sin of blasphemy. It was evil to reject all the sign-miracle evidence that Jesus had done pointing to the fact that He is Messiah-God.

By the way it was very clear in the Old Testament that the coming Messiah would indeed be both God and Man in one person.

Slide # 14

Jeremiah 23:5–6 (NKJV)

5 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to **David** a Branch of righteousness; **A King** shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is **His name** by which He will be called: **THE LORD [YHWH] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Note the overtones in the text here in Matthew that point to Jesus being God.

Slide # 15

CHRIST’S DEITY ON DISPLAY...

“Jesus saw their faith” – Mt. 9:2

“your sins are forgiven” – Mt. 9:2

“knowing their thoughts” – Mt. 9:4

5 For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’?

Jesus here, in effect, challenges them to be consistent in their thinking. Now realize He has just said to the paralytic, “***your sins are forgiven you.***”

But now He puts forth the question: “Which is easier to say, “***Your sins are forgiven***” or “***Arise and walk***”? As far as just saying the words one can say them with equal ease, but in terms of outward evidence demanded it is much easier to say, “*Your sins are forgiven*” *than to say, “Arise and walk”*.”

You see, anyone could pronounce “Your sins are forgiven” but how would anyone ever really know? There is no outward proof demanded. It can’t be tested! It is unobservable and unprovable. That is easy. Anyone could say it without confirming evidence! Mere talk is easy to do! To make claims that are unable to be substantiated is easy.

In reality the greater thing is actually the forgiveness of sins, but again it is in the abstract and therefore easy to claim with no verification possible.

Any clergy type person dressed up in religious garb might sprinkle a little holy water and intone “your sins are forgiven”. That is easy! Merely saying “you are forgiven” provides no concrete proof of anything.

On the other hand, to say, “**Arise and walk**” demands outward immediate results. If the person can’t do it – it would show immediately that the person is a fraud just spouting words. So saying, “**Arise and walk**” is much harder in the sense that it demands immediate outward evidence as proof that the person saying it actually has the power make it happen.

6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.”

The way Jesus stated this should have gotten their attention. He calls Himself the “**Son of Man**” which was clearly a Messianic designation going back to Dan. 7:13-14.

Slide # 16

Daniel 7:13–14 (NKJV)

13 “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the **Son of Man**, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

14 Then to Him was **given dominion and glory and a kingdom**, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an **everlasting dominion**, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

This “**Son of Man**” designation was clearly no regular man. He is called “**Son of Man**” but with God-like qualities in that He comes with the clouds of heaven and He reigns supreme over all forever. He has eternal glory and an eternal kingdom. Thus, He lives forever in this capacity.

Clearly Jesus was claiming to be this unique Messiah figure in calling Himself “**the Son of Man**” (which by the way was His favorite designation of Himself occurring some 78 times in the gospels). And the proof provided was not in abstract terms but rather comes in concrete objective terms that were immediately to be demonstrated.

That they might KNOW He has the divine power to forgive sins He commanded the paralytic to take up his bed and go to his house. The word “**power**” is more accurately translated as “**authority**”. Again, in view is Lordship authority indicative of being Lord-God.

The observable physical miracle of healing provided proof of the unobservable spiritual miracle of forgiveness. A key reason for this miracle was to show that Christ indeed had the Lordship authority to forgive sins.

This all fits with a kingdom narrative. Christ was the promised King doing kingdom miracles, thus providing kingdom proof that He was indeed the prophesied Messiah.

Slide # 17

This is one of the most significant signs Jesus performs relative to the kingdom program. It shows that He is capable of forgiving sins on earth. – ***Stanley Toussaint***

The Jews of Jesus day commonly drew a link between sin and sickness. They looked forward to the coming Messiah who would remove both sin and sickness as He brings in the kingdom. The coming of the kingdom brings forth both deliverance from sin as well as sickness. This connection is emphasized in the OT Scriptures, and it is the Messiah that brings it about.

Slide # 18

(Kingdom Forgiveness Context)

Jeremiah 50:20 (NKJV)

20 In those days and in that time," says the LORD, "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but there shall be none; And the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found; For I will pardon those whom I preserve.

(Kingdom Healing Context)

Isaiah 35:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.

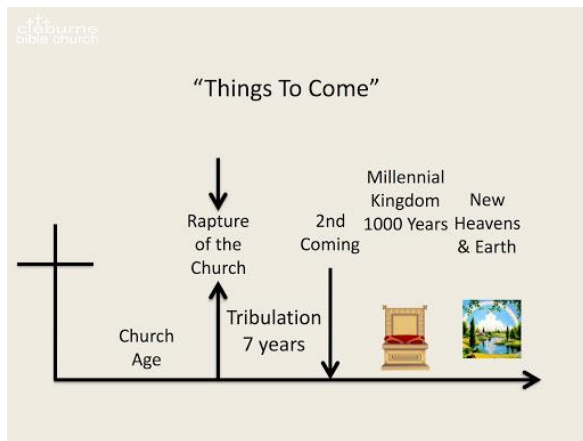
Slide # 19

Isaiah 33:24 (NKJV)

24 And the inhabitant will not say, “I am sick”; The people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity.

How does this happen? It doesn't happen apart from the divine-human Messiah who brings it about when He comes to usher in the kingdom.

Slide # 20



The point being emphasized is that the kingdom will be a time when the Son of Man brings about cleansing from sin in combination with physical healing for all those who put their faith in Him. What we have in Jesus' earthly ministry is a little snap shot of this coming kingdom reality. Again, He was the King presenting the kingdom to Israel on the condition of repentance. And the miracles He did were evidence that He was indeed the Messiah in keeping with OT prophecy.

The problem was that Israel did not come to repentance and so the kingdom offer was withdrawn at that time and postponed. It is still coming, but it is a future reality that awaits Israel's repentance.

Slide # 21

Christ is Building His Church

Tribulation – Israel Repents

Second Coming – Kingdom Reign

In doing this miracle Christ showed that He is indeed the prophesied Messianic "**Son of Man**" (combination God-Man) who is able to forgive sins on earth and bring about kingdom conditions described in the OT in places like Isa. 33; 40; 44; and 60 (cf. Isa. 33:24; 40:1-2; 44:21-22; 60:20-21).

Here is how the logic – if followed consistently would look. When Jesus healed the man born blind in John 9 here is how he reasoned with the Jewish religious leaders...

Slide # 22

John 9:30–31 (NKJV)

30 The man answered and said to them, “Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet **He has opened my eyes!**

31 Now **we know that God does not hear sinners**; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.

Proper reasoning goes like this: If Jesus was indeed a blasphemer in pronouncing forgiveness, then He would not be able to perform a wholesome physical miracle that is clearly of God. But since He did the physical miracle the spiritual reality of forgiving sins must also be true. That is consistent spiritual thinking. But alas the religious leaders in Israel largely refused to be consistent with the logic of the truth. No wonder Jesus called them out as having evil thoughts in their hearts.

Footnote:

Slide # 23

Miracles in the Gospels and Acts frequently occur to substantiate those whom God used to initiate a new movement and to validate new revelation. – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

Hebrews 2:3–4 (NKJV)

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the **first** began to be spoken by the **Lord**, and was confirmed to us by those who **heard Him** [apostles],

4 God also bearing witness both with **signs and wonders**, with various **miracles**, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

The ministry of Christ, and by extension His apostles, who uniquely were His authoritative representatives, had their ministries validated by special signs and wonders. But Christ’s ministry was the most unique as He did things such as **directly forgiving sins** which no one else ever did. He was unique for indeed He was the God-Man Who is the Messiah!

7 And he arose and departed to his house.

This must have completely stymied Christ's critics for we hear no more about them. None of the 3 synoptic gospels (Mt., Mk, and Lk) mention any response from the scribes. The fact that He instantly healed this paralyzed man showed that indeed He did have the authority to forgive sins. It was undeniable! This is what has been termed "in your face" testimony!

Not only was the paralytic physically healed, in this miracle he also had full assurance that he was forgiven, and the charge of blasphemy was roundly refuted.

8 Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

The miracle was amazing causing the multitudes who saw it to be afraid and glorify God. The word translated here as "**marveled**" in the NKJV is more literally "**they were afraid**". This kind of supernatural power on display was awesome but it also was terrifying.

Mark 2:12 adds that the people said, "**We never saw anything like this!**" Never before had they seen a pronouncement of forgiveness followed up by a supernatural miracle of physical healing of a completely disabled person.

This response of the multitudes is in complete contrast to that of the Gadarenes in chapter 8 who upon seeing Jesus' power over demons asked Jesus to leave. They too were undoubtedly afraid but did not glorify God. In contrast these folk in Capernaum were overwhelmed by this power and gave glory to God for it.

And yet they missed the point: Note it says they "**glorified God, who had given such power to men.**" They missed the point. God hasn't given the authority to forgive sins to men. They missed the point – Jesus was not merely a man, but the messianic Son of Man!

They should have been consistent with the theology of the scribes which said only God can forgive sins – they should have been consistent with the healing miracle which verified that indeed Christ did have the power to forgive sins – and they should have been consistent with sound spiritual logic that concludes that Jesus is not merely a man – but rather the God-Man which is consistent with Who the Messiah would be as testified by the OT prophets.

From this they should have realized that what they had witnessed was not a demonstration of God giving authority to men but of God's presence among them in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

– **William MacDonald**

What is the greatest thing Jesus ever did in His pre-cross earthly ministry? He healed the sick, He raised the dead, He cast our demons, He calmed the storm, He fed the multitudes. But I submit to you that the greatest thing that He did was provide forgiveness for those who believe in Him. And He proved to have the authority to forgive sins by instantly restoring the paralytic to full health. No one in the history of the world has ever done that before or after. This combination of providing forgiveness with incontrovertible supernatural proof is unparalleled.

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." – C.S. Lewis

Lewis was absolutely right: Jesus is either a Liar, a Lunatic, or He is Lord!

Who is He to you?

Acts 16:31 (NKJV)

31 So they said, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved**, you and your household."