

When Jesus Met a Genius

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[0 : 00] Our scripture reading this morning is from John chapter 3. We're going to read verses 1 through 16. Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. Jesus answered him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus said to him, How can these things be? And Jesus answered him, Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

[1 : 20] Truly, truly, I say to you, We speak of what we know and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

This is God's Word. Thank you very, very much indeed for the opportunity to be with you again today.

It's always a massive joy and privilege to come and be with you here at St. Sees for two reasons. One, because we get to see many, many old friends who we love so very, very much.

[2 : 25] But it's also brilliant to come here because every time I come, we see so many new faces, and we see the church family here growing, which is an absolute joy to see. So thank you very much for this opportunity, and I bring you the warmest greetings of the congregation in Carloway and the church in Lewis.

So thank you very much for the chance to be here with you today. And I'm also delighted to be able to participate in the series that you're doing over the summer, Encounters with Jesus. And today we're going to look at one of the most famous encounters that somebody had with Jesus, the passage we read in John chapter 3.

And I'll just read the first three verses again. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. Jesus answered him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Now, this is a very famous and a very fascinating passage, and there's loads that it teaches us, loads that we could look at, and I'm conscious that in so many ways we're only going to be just barely scratching the surface in what is really one of the most remarkable conversations that Jesus ever had.

Why is it so remarkable? Well, there's lots of reasons, but one of the main reasons, and what I want us to focus on, is the fact that this was the night when Jesus met a genius.

[3 : 55] Jesus met a genius. Now, you might say, well, how do we know that Nicodemus was a genius? Well, at one level, we don't know for certain. All we know is what it says in verse 1 and verse 10.

It says that he was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, a teacher of Israel. And I'm sure many of you would maybe be tempted to say today, well, if you look at current politics, you think, well, you don't need to be a genius to be a ruler.

And maybe some of you are in school, and you might even think, well, you don't need to be a genius to be a teacher. And maybe that's true. And I concede, you know, we don't know exactly what Nicodemus' IQ was.

But it's definitely the case that if you were just a normal, ordinary Jew living at the time when this conversation happened, if you had seen Nicodemus walk past, you would have thought to yourself, that's a guy who knows his stuff.

He's the expert. He's the teacher of Israel. And that phrase could actually mean that he held a very, very high-profile position in the nation.

[5 : 02] And one commentator I read described him as Reverend Professor Dr. Nicodemus. And it's definitely the case that in terms of religious knowledge and expertise, Nicodemus was at the top.

This chapter's telling us about the night when Jesus met a genius. And their conversation raises three crucial things that every one of us needs to think about.

We need to think about necessity, mystery, and certainty. Now, I don't know if I've got them up on the screen. Oh, there we are. Now, we need to think about necessity, mystery, and genius.

Now, I'm going to just start by asking you the question, do you want these things? Do you want necessity? Do you want mystery? Do you want certainty?

And I want to ask those questions because I think many people in our culture today would actually say, well, no. We don't want necessity because we don't want to be told what absolutely does and does not have to happen.

[6 : 09] And we don't want mystery. We want clarity. And we want explanations. But at the same time, we don't really want certainty because we want to be flexible. We want to keep our options open.

We do not want to be dogmatic. We want each person maybe to have their own certainty, but nothing overarching at all. Do you want these things?

Well, we're going to look together at John 3, and we'll come back to these questions at the end. So I want to start by thinking about necessity. Nicodemus had a lot of strong credentials.

As we saw, he was Pharisee, ruler of the Jews, teacher. He also recognized that Jesus was someone special, recognized that Jesus was a teacher from God, and he had even seen, or at least spoken to those who had seen Jesus perform miracles.

He said, no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. So at one level, all of that sounds like the ideal qualifications for someone to come to God. And Nicodemus is interesting because, unlike many of the other religious leaders at the time, it doesn't seem to be the case that he was as opposed and hostile towards Jesus as many others were.

[7 : 22] He seems to be, at this stage at least, to have a more open disposition towards Jesus. Maybe he thought that he'd come to Jesus, and maybe Jesus would give Nicodemus some kind of affirmation and recognition like everybody else probably gave him.

But that's not what happens. Because when Nicodemus met Jesus, the genius is told that there's something he desperately needs.

Look at what it says from verse 3 to 7. Jesus answered him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?

Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one's born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Do not marvel that I say to you, you must be born again. Now, that other section there is a ticky one. This whole passage is a bit of a ticky one for two reasons. One is because it's hard to understand all the details that are being spoken about.

[8 : 30] Especially in verse 5, there's lots of different opinions about what Jesus means. When he talks about water and Spirit, is he talking about two different things?

Or is it two ways of describing the same thing? Or is it two aspects of the one thing? So is it physical birth, being born of water, and then spiritual birth, being born of the Spirit? Is it referring to baptism in water, and then spiritual new birth that comes through faith in Christ? Or are both referring to the same thing, as being born of water, being born of water and the Spirit, the one thing that happens when we believe.

If you think about the phrase, you need to eat a sandwich of cheese and of ham. Is that a cheese sandwich and a ham sandwich, or is it a cheese and ham sandwich?

Is it two separate things? Is it the same thing together? There's lots of different views on that. Later in verses 13 to 15, Jesus talks about ascending and descending from heaven, and there's all this stuff about Moses and a serpent.

[9 : 33] There's lots, that's really, lots of details that can be hard to understand. But the second reason why the passage is tricky is because it's also very easy to misunderstand the main point that's been made.

Because the main message, the phrase that this passage is famous for is the words of verse 7, where Jesus says, you must be born again.

That's a phrase that you hear again and again and again in the Christian church. And maybe it's the case that that phrase is so emphasized that we get the impression that being born again is something that we do.

So, it basically means to believe in Christ. That's how it's used. And sometimes preachers can give the impression that, you know, it's something that you've got to do.

So, you've got to be born again. You've got to believe in Christ. So, you must do this. It's something you've got to do. It's very easy to give that impression.

[10 : 34] But that's not actually correct. Because the whole point that this passage is making is that being born again is not something that we do.

It's something that gets done to us. It's something that happens to us. In fact, it's something that has got to happen to us.

Jesus confronts Nicodemus with a fundamental necessity. He's got to be born again. And so do we. Now, what does all that mean? What's Jesus talking about? Well, this language of being born again is referring to what the New Testament will later describe in the language of regeneration.

And that's the big theological term that often gets used to describe this. And that word regeneration is describing a change that takes place in our hearts where we go from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive.

[11 : 41] Sin has left us spiritually dead. Now, one of the ways to think about that is to recognize that everything that we think of in terms of being dead physically applies to us spiritually.

So, imagine a dead body. A dead body is unresponsive. That's how sin has left us spiritually. We don't see our need for God. We don't listen to Him.

We don't respond to His call. A dead body can't perceive anything. And spiritually, we're the same. All around us, people are the same. People going about their daily lives with no sense, no perception of the spiritual danger that they're in.

A dead body is incapacitated. Can't do anything to revive itself. Sin's left us in the same condition. We're incapable of doing anything ourselves that's going to restore our relationship with God.

A dead body is a human separated. Body and soul separated. Sin has had the same effect on us. We are separated from God. And the big point is this.

[12 : 43] On its own, a dead body can do nothing except stay dead. And we've got to recognize that spiritually that's the condition that sin has left us in.

And regeneration is describing the fact that the gospel means that that state of spiritual deadness gets changed into spiritual life.

The state of spiritual deadness in our hearts gets changed so that we become spiritually alive again. And that life enables us to see our sin.

It enables us to hear God's call. It enables us to turn from our sin and repentance and to turn to Jesus in faith. It enables us to be reunited to Him in a life-giving relationship.

And the key point, the absolutely crucial point, is that that transforming work of regeneration is not something that we do. The person who does it is God.

[13 : 56] And that's why the language of being born again is so clear and so helpful and so powerful. Because birth implies two things.

One, it's passive. Nobody births themselves. It's something that happens to you. You're born, and that is completely and entirely because of what someone else has done. And so birth is passive. But secondly, birth brings life. Birth, the new birth that Jesus is talking about brings spiritual life. Now, Nicodemus comes to Jesus on this night, and he's a genius in a religion that says that you need to do this, that, and the next thing yourself in order to know God. You need to do this. You need to do that. You need to keep this law. You need to remember this. And Jesus says to him, you need to forget about what gets done by you. The thing that matters is what gets done to you.

That's the necessity. Nicodemus needs to be born again. And this becomes even clearer in the original language of the Old Testament. Now, they say to never do this, but I'm on holiday, so I'm breaking all my rules.

[15:17] This is the Greek for the phrase, you must be born again. *Dei humas genethenai* another. Now, that word *dei* at the start literally translates, it is necessary.

And then the second word, *humas*, means for you or to you, for you. So at the very start of that sentence, you've got the phrase, it is necessary for you to be born is the third word. Again is the last word. It is necessary for you to be born again. And it becomes so much clearer when you see that. Because when I say, you must be born again, you think, oh, well, I must do that. No, it is necessary for you to be born again. Something has to happen to you. It's an absolute necessity for Nicodemus and for us.

All of this comes as a huge surprise to Nicodemus. But it shouldn't have. Because the Old Testament that he's supposed to be the expert in has already said that this is how it works.

[16:19] And a key passage in that regard comes in Ezekiel in the prophecy, that great prophecy, chapter 36, where through the prophet, God says, I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you to your own land.

I'll sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I'll give you a new heart and a new spirit I'll put within you. I will remove the heart of stone in your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

And I'll put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and to be careful to obey my rules. Now look at those verses. What's the key point? God's doing it all. Look at how many times it says, I will, I will, I will, I will.

It's all God's actions. And I think that when we see these verses alongside the verses in John 3 about being born of water and being born of the spirit, you can see the connections, can't you? The connections are actually so strong and you realize this is actually what Jesus is talking about. And that's where I think that maybe if you're trying to understand what does it mean to be born of water and the spirit, I think the explanation is coming from Ezekiel that it's talking about the same thing, the cleansing, life-giving renewal that comes through Jesus, through faith in him, through the one who was to come to restore God's people.

[17:45] So in other words, in John 3, Jesus is speaking about what Ezekiel had prophesied all those years ago. It's about the fact that if we're going to be saved, we need God to change our hearts, to cleanse us, to take us from darkness into light, to bring life where sin has left us dead.

And the rest of the New Testament echoes this teaching. Ephesians 2, we were dead in our trespasses and sins, we've been made alive together in Christ by God. 1 Peter 1, God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He's caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

And in fact, John's Gospel has already told us that this is how it works. At the very start, he said, to all who did receive Jesus, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God who were born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of the man, but of God.

For anyone to come to faith in Jesus, it's only ever possible if God acts. And so when Jesus says to you, you must be born again, He's not telling you to do something.

He's telling you that you desperately need something. Now, the minute we recognize that, there's two big traps that we can fall into. One is to think that it's not a necessity.

[19:09] And it's so easy to think like that. It's so easy to think, well, yeah, I get this is important, but it's not that important. It's not unnecessary for it to be all God.

Surely I can do a bit myself. But when we think like that, whenever we think like that, we are massively underestimating the effect that sin has had on our lives. Spiritually, sin has completely jiggered us.

That's why the language of deadness is used again and again and again in Scripture. Because that's how serious it is. That's how much damage has done. We are utterly helpless.

Can you save yourself by doing stuff? Can you save yourself by your own efforts? Well, that's the equivalent of asking yourself, can you born yourself?

The other danger is to think that, yes, it is a necessity, and yes, God does have to do it.

[20 : 11] And that means it's probably not going to happen for me. And lots of people think like that. It's so easy to think like that, to think, well, if I can't do anything, and if it's all God, then I'm snookered.

If God has to do it, what if he doesn't? What if it doesn't happen? Well, if you're worrying that right now, if you're thinking, well, what if this hasn't happened to me?

What if this doesn't happen to me? And what if God just goes past me? What should you do? Well, well, you need to ask, what's the first sign that God is doing this work in somebody?

Is it that you recognize success? So you can start looking at yourself and think, yeah, I know, I know I'm born again. I know this has happened. I know. Is that, is it, is the first step that you recognize success?

No, I don't think that's the first step. I think the first sign is that you recognize necessity. That you start off by saying, I need to be born again.

[21 : 31] One of the very first signs of spiritual life in your heart is being able to see that being born again is an absolute necessity.

So take heart if that's what you're wondering. There's more to learn from this passage when you think about mystery. Nicodemus struggles with all that Jesus is saying.

And there's a really interesting contrast between Nicodemus and verse 2 when he says, we know that you are a teacher come from God. And then in verse 9, he's like, how can these things be? Nicodemus is struggling to understand Jesus. And that's because there's an element of mystery surrounding what Jesus is teaching.

And that sense of mystery is reinforced by verse 8 where Jesus says, the wind blows what it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don't know where it's coming from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

[22 : 34] Now here, Jesus presents us with a reality that's often very hard to accept. but one which actually makes perfect sense. He's facing us with the reality that when it comes to God, we will always have to embrace mystery.

We will always have to embrace mystery. And that makes perfect sense because the only way of avoiding mystery with God is to be God.

And Jesus uses the wind as his illustration for this. And his point is that, you know, when it comes to the wind, you can't explain its source. You can only observe its effect. Now today, we might say, well, we understand wind.

We know how high pressure and low pressure works. And we can actually map the direction of the wind. In fact, we can even predict the direction of the wind. But that's not the point because the key thing we have to recognize is that Jesus is speaking to the people of his time who didn't recognize that and didn't understand that in the way that we do now.

It's an illustration that's relative to his audience. If Jesus was coming and speaking today, I think he would maybe use the illustration of gravity because there's still a lot that we don't understand about gravity.

[23 : 45] We don't really know how it works, but we can definitely see its effect. When it comes to being born again, when it comes to that great work of God where he changes us from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive, there is a lot that's a mystery.

So precisely how it happens, precisely when it happens, I can't explain every detail of that, but we absolutely can see its effect.

You can see it in your own lives. You can see it in the lives of others. You can see it in the history of the church. There's absolutely no doubt that for millions and millions of people, an amazing change has taken place.

And that's why when it comes to being born again, I don't think it's wise to try and waste our time explaining every aspect of the source. Instead, you need to look for the effect.

And that's so important for anybody here who struggles with doubts. So some of you may be here or maybe not sure if you're a Christian yet or not, and you're thinking, well, I really don't know where I stand before God. Some of you may have said for a long time, I am a Christian, but actually deep down, and you're constantly plagued with doubts, thinking, well, am I really?

[25 : 04] And you see things in your life that make you question it and doubt it. And many of us struggle with that question of assurance. Am I really a Christian yet?

I don't know. I'm not sure. For some people, becoming a Christian is sudden and clear and obvious. Their conversion from darkness to light is like a switch.

But for most people, for me, and I'm sure for the majority of people here, that movement from darkness to light is not a switch. It's a dawn that happens slowly and gradually.

And for the gradual ones, there's always the question, how do I know it's actually happened? How do I know I'm saved? Well, one of the questions you can ask yourself is this.

If you think back to a time in your life when you know that you weren't really that interested in Jesus at all and none of this was really on your radar and then look at yourself now, ask the question, are you different?

[26 : 09] And I'm not asking, are you perfect? I'm not asking, are you sorted? And I'm not asking, you know, are you where you want to be? I'm not asking that question at all. I'm just asking, are you different? So are you drawn towards Jesus in a way that you never were before?

Do you realize now that you never knew before that you need Him? Do you wish you could say, I'm a Christian? Do you look at other Christians whom you know and love and think, what they have is absolutely what I want in my life?

And do you feel, do you pray more now than you used to? Do you read God's Word in a way now where it's actually starting to quench your thirst in a way that it never did before? Do you understand that you need Jesus more than anything?

And if the answer to any of those questions is yes, and even if it's a yes that still has a very long way to go, if the answer is yes, then it tells you that God's wind is blowing in your heart.

And if you're still doubting that, then here's the proof. Dead people don't even think about those questions. Now, all of this is reminding us that when it comes to God, to creation, to salvation, to new birth, to the interactions of time and eternity, to the disclosure of God's revelation in Scripture, to the outworking of God's purposes across history and in your own life, in all of that stuff, there is a lot of mystery.

[27 : 42] And I can't explain it all. None of us can explain it all. There's unavoidable mystery in all of these things. And rightly so, rightly so, because God is so much bigger than us.

He always will be. He's always meant to be. And if you don't like mystery, you think, well, I don't want a God that's mysterious. I don't want a faith that I can't explain everything.

Well, you've got to think of the alternatives, because when it comes to God, the alternatives to mystery are worse. And I can only actually think of three. One is blasphemy, where we basically, we dictate to God and say to God, this is what you should be like, and this is the box that you need to fit in, and you need to conform to all the explanations that I can handle.

That's actually blasphemy, because that's to bring God down from who He really is. The other is idolatry, where we think, well, I don't want that mysterious God. I'll start worshipping this that I can fully understand.

And we exchange the real God for a false God. Or the third alternative to mystery is just blindness, where we just wander around aimlessly thinking, I don't know.

[28 : 57] I'm not going to think about it. But here's a crucial question. We're recognizing that we've got to embrace mystery, but does embracing mystery mean that everything is ultimately a guess?

Well, that takes us to our last point, certainty. And this brings us to actually one of the biggest mistakes that people can fall into, and one that frequently has led people to dismiss Christianity and say, this is not for me.

And the mistake is this. We think that mystery and certainty are incompatible. And when people think like that, they tend to say things like, if you can prove to me that God exists, then I'll believe. If you can prove the Bible with evidence, then I'll believe. If you can eliminate all mystery, then I'll believe.

If you can explain why this, that, and the next thing has happened to me in my life, then I will believe. And all of that kind of thinking, it's easy, it's understandable, but it all lies on the assumption that mystery and certainty are incompatible.

[30 : 10] But that's not true. Mystery does not have to result in doubt and skepticism. And that actually makes perfect sense because it's true in every area of knowledge, not just in terms of faith.

And one of the best examples of that is science. Because science is constantly trying to find certainty, but it is full of mystery. And just, if you want to confirm that, if you want to confirm that science is full of mystery, just go and ask a genius.

Go and ask someone at the very top of their game in high energy physics or whatever other area of science it might be. I had a conversation with somebody from that world, somebody who has a PhD and lasting, you know, excellent career in all of that world.

And we were chatting all about this and they said to me, mathematically, a positron is an electron traveling backwards in time. And just smiled at me. And James Clark Maxwell, amazing business from the 19th century, Scottish, Scottish, all the best guys are Scottish.

He didn't know everything that Einstein discovered and yet he was the guy that Einstein had a picture of on his wall because Einstein said, well, I would never have discovered what I would have if it wasn't for James Clark Maxwell. And I am 100% sure that neither of them would stand up here today and say, there's no mystery in physics.

[31 : 43] There's still so much to discover. Does that mean, though, that we doubt everything that James Clark Maxwell and Einstein discovered? No. We can have certainty about so much of what they discovered.

They've taught us more and more and more about the amazing world that God has made. Mystery is unavoidable in every area of knowledge, even in relationships.

Why does Una love me? You might be saying, well, that is a mystery. But it is because love is a mystery.

Physics is a mystery. DNA is a mystery. But in all those mysteries, we can still have certainty. And that is absolutely true when it comes to faith.

There's always going to be mysteries about God. There has to be. But that doesn't mean that we cannot have certainty. So how do we get it? How do we get certainty? Well, the answer is that we listen to what God reveals.

[32 : 46] And that's exactly what Jesus speaks about in verses 11 to 13. Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, we bear witness to what we've seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. Now, just as a wee note, it's really interesting when it says, truly, I say to you, that you is plural.

So he's speaking to more than just Nicodemus. Jesus is wanting all of us to hear and listen to this. And what Jesus is saying is this, he's saying nobody is qualified to give answers about, nobody can give answers about God unless he's qualified to give those answers.

And again, that's true in physics, maths, geology, history, everything else. You can only give answers if you're qualified to do so. But the person qualified to give answers about God is not a religious genius like Nicodemus.

The person qualified to reveal God is God and no one else. So nobody can ascend to heaven and tell God, this is what you're like and then come back and explain it to us.

[33 : 59] No, it has to be the other way around. God has to descend and reveal himself. And that's exactly what he's doing in Jesus.

He is God the Son descended to reveal who God is. And the message that he reveals is a message of salvation.

And that's why he goes on to talk about, oh, I've gone too far there, sorry. Oh, I didn't put it on the screen. Anyway, you can look it up if it's before you. It's on the bulletin. That's why he talks about the snake in the wilderness.

Because back in the Old Testament, there was a shadow of that salvation. It's in Numbers 21.

There was a plague of snakes among the Israelites and God told Moses to make a bronze snake, put the snake on a pole.

Everybody who had been bitten could look at the snake and they would be healed. They would be saved. And that, like everything else in the Old Testament, was a shadow pointing towards God's great and ultimate plan of salvation where Jesus, God the Son, would be lifted up on the cross so that all who look on him might be saved.

[35 : 22] Now, that work of salvation contains mystery. But that mystery does not mean that you cannot have certainty. Jesus' message is actually crystal clear.

Whoever believes in me will be saved. But there's one thing I want you to notice and this is part of what makes the gospel so, so good.

We've been saying that in regard to regeneration, going from life to death, death to life, death, there's mystery about how that happens. And there's also mystery about precisely when it happens. Not many people can pinpoint the exact moment when they were regenerated and they were born again. There's mystery about how and there is mystery about when.

But there is no mystery about why. There is no mystery about why it happens.

[36 : 30] We know exactly why this happens. It happens because of how much God loves you. And ultimately, that is the certainty that the gospel offers you.

Not certainty about every detail of all the massive questions that we have about God and humanity and time and eternity and life and reality. We're not big enough to know everything about everything and we do not need to know everything about everything.

In other words, we don't need to be geniuses because before God, no one is a genius. But what we do need to know is what God wants us to know.

And the certainty that the gospel gives you is the certainty that God loves you. That he sent his son to save you and whoever believes in him will not perish!

But have eternal life. So let's finish with our questions. Do you want necessity? Do you want mystery? Do you want certainty?

[37 : 42] Maybe it's clearer if we put those questions the other way around. Do you want to build your life on stuff that isn't really necessary? Do you want a worldview or a universe or a God with no mystery?

And do you want a life with no certainty? Or do you want the gospel? Because the gospel will tell you what the most urgent necessity in your life is.

The gospel will point you to the God who is magnificent but in whom there is an eternity of mystery to discover and the gospel will give you certainty. Certainty about the magnitude of God's love for you.

certainty about the fact that he sent his son to die for you. Certainty about the fact that all you have to do is trust him. And certainty that if you do you will have eternal life with him forever.

You do not need to be a genius to understand all of that. And you do not need to be a genius to have all of that. But if you don't want that and if you think this isn't for me I don't think you're clever I think you're crazy.

[39 : 10] Amen. Let's pray. Amen. Lord Jesus thank you so so much for coming to reveal the truth of how much we need you the truth of how small we are before you and the truth of how amazing your love for us has always been and always will be.

Help us to see and understand all of these things more and help us to look to you to trust you and to follow you today this week and for the rest of our lives.

Amen.