

Christ Unique

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[0 : 00] I would like to turn back to Matthew chapter 22. We are going to look fairly loosely at part of this chapter in the sense of broadening it beyond the words that Jesus was speaking.

I will come to that shortly. We are going to look particularly at the section from verse 41, the second section, although what Jesus says before that is also pretty relevant to or important in where it is in the passage. Now as I was saying that goes that a friend in need is a pain in the neck and that is often the way that we think today sometimes isn't it? Because what we like doing in many ways, maybe not consciously and I am sure that is a very harsh and cynical summary of the thoughts of it is maybe just my own heart, truth be told sometimes. But the truth is that very often in our lives we would not maybe articulate it quite as bluntly as that, but we just really want to get on with life and we just want to get on with life fairly unhindered.

We don't really want to be terribly involved in people's issues and people's problems and difficulties or if we do it certainly in our own terms and we just want to live a quiet life and you know there is nothing wrong with that. There is nothing wrong with that. The Bible speaks about that, just getting on with our life and working quietly with our hands and it is a good thing to do isn't it? And it is a good thing when everything goes quite smoothly for us and we are just moseying along, we are just carrying along, rather unperturbed by everything that may be happening around us. Can I give you an illustration? I mentioned this morning that I had a second driving illustration, I am sorry, very unoriginal. I don't have many thoughts about illustrations but driving seems to be one that I keep coming back to. But can you imagine you are on a holiday abroad, okay? As carefree holiday abroad, you don't have any worries of work or answering the phone or emails or hassles or problems, it is in the sun, you are enjoying a great time, you are with your friends. But you decide you hire a car one day and you decide to go out on your own in the car, just for a bit of me time and you are driving away and you are on your own in the car and you get lost. You get lost when you are driving, fine if it is in Scotland and you get GPS, there is no GPS. I am not saying what it is, I don't know. But there is no GPS because it spoils the story. But as you are trying to find your way back, it starts to get dark and in that kind of darkening, you begin to get a little bit disorientated about where you are and you come to a junction and you say I am pretty sure I turn right here. But because you are a bit disorientated and you are not thinking properly, you just pull straight out. But you forget that you are driving on the other side of the road and you plunge straight into a car that is coming your way, head on. A very serious accident, you are not injured but the person who is driving the other car is killed. And all of a sudden your life completely turns upside down. Now I don't know if this is right or not but I am just saying for the sake of this illustration you are taken into custody because of that. You don't know exactly the cause of it but they know it has been a serious accident, you have caused the death of someone and all of a sudden you are incarcerated overnight until they find out what has happened. And all of a sudden that kind of life of being relaxed and minding your own business and doing things on your own and having a holiday and not having any care and worries in the world, all of a sudden it is completely turned on its head and you are alone in a prison cell, in a place you don't know anything about, you don't know the language, you don't know the culture and you desperately need help. You know before you are really quite independent, you are quite self-contained, everything is going well for you and you are on holiday and then all of a sudden you are desperately looking for someone who can help you in this situation that you are in and this doesn't see what is happening. You are looking for someone who knows what is going on, who will help you understand the situation and maybe help you get out of that situation. Now that is a very imperfect illustration and you can't compare it with spiritual truth or spiritual reality really but the message of the Bible is always to bring us to that point where we see the great need that we have, you know where we see the condition that we are in and where we seek help to be redeemed from that situation in the same way that you would all of a sudden in a prison cell where you were desperately looking for help and that is why I

am setting it in that context because I want to show and God wants us to know the importance of the kind of saviour that we have and we are going to come around to the theology of it shortly, that he is both fully God and he is also fully human. See because the Bible makes clear to us and you know this but I am going to put it in slightly different terms, the Bible makes clear to us that we are in that position of being imprisoned kind of isn't it, spiritually without a redeemer, without Christ in our lives. The reason I am saying this is because sometimes I think it is very important for us to be able to share that with others. Rather than what obviously we were looking at this morning, the accusations of the student magazine against the Chalmers Church which we mentioned this morning which seemed to suggest that the Chalmers Church were very high and mighty people who were standing in judgment over everybody else and looking down on their moral superiority. We never want to give that and I don't believe for a moment the Chalmers Church gives that impression but we don't for a moment want to give that impression of ourselves because the reality is every one of us without Christ is guilty in a sense as we saw this morning, guilty before God and why are we guilty? Yes we are law breakers okay. Some people would find that very difficult to comprehend what that means or would find it very legalistic. So we must point them to the reality that we are law breakers of God's law of love. That's what we are breakers of and that's why this greatest commandment that's mentioned from verse 34 to 40 is significant in where it's placed before Jesus claiming both to be the Son of God and the Son of Man which we'll come to in a moment. It's the law of love that people have broken. That is the summation of all of the law of God. It is that we have not loved the Lord our God with our heart, with our soul and with our mind and we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves. We are culpable because we've replaced it. What have we replaced it with? With self-love. So God has been abandoned and we still love but self-love is first and God's love doesn't come into it neither necessarily and in the right place does their love for one another. But we very often don't I think appreciate that and

I feel that sometimes we can be very negative in the way that we express these things to people and it's right. It's a dire condition but people live a lot of people live their lives in a very carefree manner and what I'm trying to say is that I think a lot of people live on the fumes of God's love. You see we can talk about the wretchedness and the brutality and the selfishness and the greed and the evil and the wickedness and the brutality of this world and all of these things are true but for ordinary people a lot of the times they are simply living on the fumes of God's love. The kind of the broken reflection of a perfect universe that we live in here. People are living in a kind of under God's what theologians would call his common grace. They're living in the knowledge, well not in the knowledge maybe but they're living in the rays of that common grace of God under the protective patience and compassion of a God who wants them to realize where they are. I don't necessarily think sometimes we would argue with people and say well you know really deep down you're miserable aren't you and you're having a rotten life and there's a great hole in your life. I think for a lot of people there's not necessarily that or they certainly don't sense it. They're just going on in life quite happily and they're kind of basking in this you know in the same ways as the illustration at the beginning of someone on holiday not really thinking about what's going on around them, not really thinking about eternity or reality just kind of basking in God's common grace and not really thinking terribly much about it.

[9 : 44] Until we can focus people's desperate need and their desperate lostness they will never genuinely seek a Savior and the reality is that somehow prayerfully and with the obviously the work of the Holy Spirit we need to them to recognize that the breaking of God's law is the breaking of his law of love putting him first and it's the breaking of a law of love towards one another because hell in reality will be the absence of even God's common grace which people reflect or kind of bask in in this life. It will be whatever else it will be and it does Bible doesn't say much about other than giving us illustrations it will be a relational darkness.

That's what hell will be it'll be a place of relational darkness where even the common grace of God will have gone and all the things that people enjoy the family the celebrations the love the marriages the births the jobs the parties the satisfaction that even the broken reflections of God's love will have gone and the patience and the grace of God seeking them to come to himself will have gone and so what we need to see and recognize for ourselves and others I guess is the reality of being lost and the reality of being lost in a lost eternity in a hellish eternity without Christ and when we recognize and we see that particular condition that we're in we see when people see our losses what the greatest weaknesses of our life today is that people aren't convicted of their lostness and of their need people don't think they need a saviour I know it can be you know it can be a theological with them and we can argue with them apologetically and all of these things but people don't see their need of a saviour and so we're longing for people to see their need of a saviour and when they do see their need then they are going to see they need someone who understands their situation and someone who can help them and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ and my aim tonight briefly is to give you more confidence in Jesus more courage to share Jesus and to communicate more with them as an absolutely sufficient and good saviour you see in this passage here the second from verse 41 if you look at to verse 45 I'm not going to get into detail in the exegesis of this passage but Jesus is speaking to the religious leaders and he's having this ongoing dialogue with them and he very briefly and very quickly is correcting their wrong view and their wrong impression of the Messiah you know I've said this a lot here and you know this that the

Jewish people of the day were looking for a political messiah someone who would be a son of David who would come through the throne of David and who would reign on the throne of David in Jerusalem and would make sure that the Romans were expunged from the nation that they would bring back the glory to Israel and there there was probably some spiritual aspect of that as well a redemptive aspect but it was generally a political messiah political king that they saw and part of that was taken from this messianic Sam some 110 I'm going to sing that at the end and they they recognized it as a messianic Sam that was speaking about this king who would come for the son of David who would reign on the throne of God forever and they were right it was a messianic Sam it was speaking about Jesus but of course they didn't attribute it to Jesus so this is Jesus giving a quick opportunity to correct their wrong impression that it wasn't just a son of David who would be the messiah but the son of David would also be the son of God and the son of God would be Jesus so we have this Jesus saying to them you know you know they talk about the messiah as the son of David and yeah they say that's right and then Jesus says but how then by the spirit does David call him Lord or God adonai how does he call him God the Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hands until I put your enemies at your feet giving us place of great significance at the right hand of the Father and they had no answer they didn't say any more words to him at that point and in that small cameo we have Jesus and he says it again and again in different places of course and there's lots of evidence and

Tom spoke about that and I've spoke about lots of evidence of Jesus being God but and in this small section he's just reaffirming that Jesus the messiah did come from the line of David so he was a person he was a man and he came and was born of a virgin but he is also son of God he's also God in the flesh and that is the whole of the New Testament teaching is all geared and all revolves around that and that's absolutely vital we know that that's where the New Testament teaches don't we why do we know that because that's what led to the crucifixion Jesus wasn't crucified for any other reason than jealousy for the religious leaders because he claimed to be God popularity and other things came into it as well but it was because he in their eyes was a blasphemer that he was sent to the cross so what I want to say just for a few minutes is that this truth of Jesus being fully man fully human and fully God is really important for us really important because it means he's the right kind of savior and we're talking about being imprisoned the right person helping you get out well he's the right kind of person so looking at the person of Christ he's a rescuer from our situation we are lost we are sinners before a holy god we're separated we're blind we're imprisoned we're guilty what do we need we need in the first place we need someone who understands don't you if you're in a bad situation if you're in prison in a foreign country you need someone who understands and spiritually we need someone who understands our condition spiritually and sometimes you think well I think a lot of people anyway a lot of people I pastor will say well I'm not sure if God's really the one who cuts it for me he's just so great and so awesome and he's so far away and he's the for many people he's the divine watchmaker but I can't see him I can't touch him and he's even fearsome to me and people can get frustrated with God and think that he's not really the kind of God who understands them and who helps them you know if frustrating it being you're speaking you think you're speaking to someone who doesn't understand you you're spoke of a call center no one understands what you're saying it's so frustrating you've got a simple problem no but this is real spiritual problems and you maybe even pray to

God and you think but he's so far away doesn't understand these no really conception of who I am that is why he's the son of David that's why that is so absolutely important because God becomes flesh and God big then understands you know we're we're beginning to see that through Ruth and through Daniel this Messiah who's going to come and that is hugely significant for this reason right to Hebrew says he had to be made like them fully human in every way in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God that he might make atonement for the sins of the people because he himself suffered me he's tempted he's able to help those who are being tempted so he becomes fully human without sin he's like well is he fully human if he's without sin he's more than fully human without sin we're less human because we sin he's more human he's perfect humanity because he doesn't see so he's the son of David and so when he is born and when he comes into this world he enters new experiences and new relationships he is a human body and a reasonable soul and this Jesus is someone then who understands you and me tonight because he's experienced pain and temptation and poverty and loneliness and being loved in a human sense and being hated in a human sense he's tasted death he knows what it is to be a son what is to be a brother a friend a neighbor he can relate to mother's day he knows what it was to have enemies to rejoice to cry to be tired to be hungry he understands fully human yet without sin so you know we come to not some kind of distant clockmaker winding up the world far away from us we come to this Christ who is able to under we go to a savior who understands us so when you come to God when you come to God or come to Christ come to God through Christ or come to the

[19 : 27] Son of God to come to the divine Son you can be assured in your imagination that he doesn't have glazed eyes that he isn't scanning his watch as you come to him with your meaning what you feel are small and insignificant issues he's not shrugging his divine shoulders and he's not looking at you thinking well what are you on about I don't understand he's not like that that's not the God he is and that's why him being fully human is so staggeringly important to us but you know more than that I need someone when I'm struggling not only he understands a great thing but I need someone and isn't this important he's someone who can help it's all very well of someone who can understand us but we need someone who can help us you know if I'm in a prison in a foreign country I might have someone in the prison cell with me who fully understands what I'm going through and who empathizes and sympathizes because they're in the same place they can't help me because they're within the prison bars as well they're within the system there's a pastor that's one of my great frustrations a great frustration is that I know I understand people's needs I don't understand everyone's needs but I do understand the pains and the doubts and the fears and the struggles and the difficulties and the bitternesses and the need for forgiveness I know but I can't help there's so many people that I can't help because you just you can come alongside and you can empathize but you we make poor saviours as people sometimes we try to be little saviours and we try to make everyone's problems go away but we can't do we can't control them we can't be in control of their lives and people generally are in this place of great isolation so we need a saviour who can help so the greatest thing about my task my work is I can point people to Jesus saying not only is this is the Christ who understands your need but this is the Christ who can help you in your need that is the wonderful thing about God being Jesus Christ being fully human and also fully divine and when we speak about being fully divine we mean that he is God and he's someone who can help there's a few things just briefly I want to say about that he has got the motive to help us okay he's God who has the motive to help he is longing to restore and heal broken relationships between heaven and earth his justice get this now it's really important his justice can't ignore our guilt but his love simply can't ignore our plight so you've got this divine lover of our souls who knows that justice demands that guilt be paid for but in his love he's moved to pay the price to act to come into our world so the very humanity of Jesus is him coming into our experience because of our need so we have he has motive but he also has ability so you know he's a good saviour because he has ability to say he's fully God and many people I think we struggle all the time thinking that Jesus can't really help me that he's an impotent saviour or even a disinterested saviour he has ability he is the one who bears the weight of our human guilt who balances the scales of divine justice and who silences the demand of the grave the insatiable hungry grave

he silences because he has the ability as the mediator between God and man that's why he must be God that's why he must be man second 1 Timothy 2 4 and 5 there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind the man Jesus Christ who gave himself as a ransom for his people there's only one mediator mediator must represent both parties and he is able to represent God and he's able represent humanity and he is fully man and he is fully God one person now there's mystery within all this I know that we know that and these biblical theologians know that and we but we accept that because that's what the Bible teaches there's this one person there's one person who has two natures a divine nature and a human nature and in his great work he hides in most instances anyway he hides that divine nature he doesn't empty himself of it he doesn't dive dive all get rid of his divinity he doesn't pour it out at that level it's hidden he's always God he's always omnipotent he's always omnipresent he's always sovereign but he becomes poor and he hides that divinity it was we see that a little bit in the transfiguration where the the glory of his divinity is pulled back and we see it and he shines with all his glory but he he he hides that in order to be fully human and to be dependent on the Holy Spirit and to give up his wealth in order to be poor to be humble that's what Philippians 2 speaks about speaks about God we mentioned that this morning being humbled for us and there's a great picture of that paradox which we struggle with you know because we ask lots of questions about his human nature and his divine nature and what did he know and what he didn't know and and what could he do and what could he couldn't do and there's there's mystery within that but is that paradoxes beautifully laid out for us and very often these theological conundrums or paradoxes are just revealed in in physical practical ways for us in the New Testament in Matthew chapter 8 where he's in the boat it's a great picture of it of his being fully human and then fully divine he's in the boat he's exhausted he's asleep he's been working hard all day he's been answering questions he's been preaching and he's exhausted in the middle of the storm he's he's asleep and he's exhausted and the disciples say look do you not care that we drown and he wakes up and he stands up and he stills the wind and the waves asleep and sovereign tired the omnipotent it's not a great way that the Bible helps us that a child can understand the paradox of this reality so he has ability and of course he also has for us qualifications he's qualified to be our Savior because he represents us and he is the one who is a suitable sacrifice Romans fies he consequently just as one trespass resulted in the condemnation for all people one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people first Corinthians 15 so it's written the first man Adam became a living being the last Adam a life-giving spirit so we have someone who represents us and can represent us because he becomes one of us so he can represent us it's a suitable representative but he's also a suitable substitute because he can pay the price

in a way that we can never do he lived a life we couldn't live as a perfect human being so what what did Jesus do what did he do that we couldn't do he loved the Lord as God with all his heart soul and strengthening and his neighbour as himself do you want to know what that looks like do you know the perfect grace looks like what the perfect christian should look like that's what it looks like it looks like Jesus it's as simple as that so he's a lamb without blemish so with all the Old Testament points towards this lamb without blemish infinitely satisfying divine justice can you see that that it's his perfect life but not just his perfect life as a human being his perfect life as God which is sacrificed and which in his death which he gives himself over to opens up the way for any who will trust in him to come to faith and then he's suitable or a someone who is can help in the sense that he is also an example in our pattern okay so recognizing him as fully God and fully man as a suitable saviour he is a saviour it's a redeemer but he also is more than that because as a person as a human being who lives out the law of God perfectly he becomes for us both a redeemer an enabler an example and a pattern so you've got this great truth from 1 John 2 verse 6 whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did as a very high standard isn't it or sent Corinthians 3 and we all with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory are being transformed into his image with ever increasing glory which comes from the Lord who's the spirit or famously Romans 8 29 for those

God for new he also predestined to what to be conformed to the image of his son you might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters so we find that Jesus is the lawkeeper when we understand what the lawkeeper looks like we fall on our knees to worship him and to ask him for the grace to also live like him to be forgiving and compassionate and loving and strong and courageous and also can I say probably most importantly as it follows on from this morning humble Philippians 2 speaks about that most of you if you have time go home and read that who thought not equality with God was something to be grasped but who emptied himself and he did that he humbled himself taking on the very nature very form of a servant to put the needs of others first so we are most Christ like when we put Christ God and the needs of others first that is a hugely demanding task hugely demanding selfishness sweats out of every single pore of our body and he comes to turn that on its head and say this is not all about you life is about

God and worshipping him and serving and loving others and that is what I hope you will take from this theologically significant and important truth that God Jesus Christ is fully human and fully God that we will see as we rise from here and sometimes look in the mirror of scripture to see the ugliness of our own hearts and sometimes the ugliness of the day in which we will go into tomorrow with all its tension and all its grief and maybe sometimes all its joy also that we will have confidence in Jesus I really don't want anyone to be a Sunday Christian I also don't want anyone to be a Christian who is testified to Christ as their Savior but he doesn't really believe that and who can't appreciate Christ as Lord or who sees God as a distant watchmaker may it be that this truth reminds us again of the confidence we can have in him the courage to live for him and can also say the vitality of communicating with him on a day-to-day basis you know he is he understands he knows he wants to hear us he is divine he is able to save he's able to help us in our need he will not necessarily give us what we want but he will answer our prayers and his sovereignty will work through our prayers and we need to have confidence to be speaking to him sharing with him going to him looking to him knowing that he understands knowing that he was fully human knowing that he remains fully human and that he is will always be human and divine and he will never he never will ditch that ever again and the the future that we look forward to will be a future where we will see Jesus and when we will have our bodies renewed in likeness to his glorious body also it's a great practical truth for us to rise from and live our lives which I hope you will do let's pray Father God help us to understand you better to understand you more clearly to know that even right in the in the heart of the Old Testament you prophesied through King David this great truth of your lordship of your messiahship being one that was gloriously unique that you are human and know as and understand us and have experienced life among us and yet in coming alongside you're not a weak and impotent and poor and helpless God our Savior but you're a great sovereign God and may these wonderful century old truths of the

[34 : 32] Orthodox tradition of the Christian faith may they hit our hearts and souls fresh tonight like they were just revealed for the first time because they remain ever living and ever present and ever vibrant because they are the truths of this living great and gracious Savior forgive us Lord when we think you're impotent or we think you don't care or you're far away or you're too unapproachable to pray to or you don't understand Lord forgive us for these things and forgive us for maybe asking for the wrong things when you promise wisdom and you promise grace and you promise courage and you promise the ability to move forward each day in your strength help us to know that to experience that and bless the young people tonight as they'll meet and look at this passage together again and some of the implications for it in their lives bless them we pray we thank you for them for their young lives and for the future that we pray and hope they have as followers of Jesus bless them and go before us all for Jesus sake amen