

Let's begin with a reset of our hearts and minds, tuning them to the amazing miracle that is our relationship with Christ. Our faith deeply touches our emotions, but it's not based on our emotions. What we believe is fantastic, but it is not a fantasy.

I. Jesus is not a myth. He was as real as any other figure in history.

This is important because fairy tales can be inspiring, but that doesn't make them true.

Many people think to believe Jesus existed is to be religious. But that's like saying I don't believe in Julius Caesar. There is broader historical corroboration for Jesus than there is for Julius Caesar.

Among Secular Historians there is a consensus - separate from faith - on the following: Jesus existed. * Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate. * His disciples truly believed they saw Him alive after death. * And this belief was central to the spread of early Christianity.

Simon Greenleaf, applied legal expertise to the evidence for Jesus' resurrection and concluded that the testimonies of the apostles were reliable. His findings are in a book titled, *Testimony of the Evangelists*, which you can get on Amazon.

So, if Jesus is historically real, what made Him historically noteworthy.

II. Jesus Presented Himself as More Than A Religious Teacher.

Let's compare Jesus words about Himself to just a few passages from the Old Testament and we may get a clearer picture of why the religious authorities opposed and feared him.

Psalm 78:24-25 - "He [The Lord God] rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. Human beings ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat."

- Jesus: "Truly, truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (John 6:32).

Exodus 33:14 - "The Lord replied, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'"

- Jesus: "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28-29)

Psalm 29:11 - "The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses His people with peace."

- Jesus: "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5) and "My peace I give to you." (John 14:27)

Psalms 16:11 - "You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

- Jesus: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:11).

Psalms 27:1 - "The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?"

- Jesus: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12).

Psalms 23:1 - "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing."

Psalms 95:7 - "For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care."

- Jesus: "I am the good shepherd." (John 10:11)

C.S. Lewis famously argued that there are only three possibilities when it comes to Jesus: He was either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord. Lewis put it succinctly in *Mere Christianity*:

"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."

The objective of Jesus' teaching was Jesus Himself. Ultimately, He was crucified for claiming to be God incarnate.

But it wasn't just what Jesus said about Himself that makes Him historically noteworthy.

III. Jesus backed up His words with His Deeds.

John 14:8-11 *Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us."*

Jesus replied, "Philip, I have been with you all this time, and still you do not know Me? ... Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me—or at least believe on account of the works themselves."

John 10:31-33 *Jesus said I and the Father are one. At this, the Jews again picked up stones to stone Him. But Jesus responded, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For*

which of these do you stone Me?” “We are not stoning You for any good work,” said the Jews, “but for blasphemy, because You, who are a man, declare Yourself to be God.”

But the ultimate validation of His claims came on the Sunday following His death. Jesus’ resurrection was not just the ultimate certification that our sins are forgiven, but also that Jesus’ claims about Himself were true.

His being alive has significance for everyone alive today.

IV. Jesus offers the world a transformative relationship with Himself.

There is an immediate spiritual transformation that takes place when a person says “Yes” to Jesus’s offer of forgiveness and eternal life. And then there is the ongoing transformation that takes place for the rest of our lives.

“You have searched me, Lord, and You know me” (Psalm 139:1).

- That transforms my experience of Him.

In Christ “better” is always ahead of us, never behind us.”

The Lord wants to be known.

Isaiah 43:10 “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am He. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”

- It underscores the intimate relationship God desires with His people, wanting them to know, believe, and understand Him fully.

1 John 5:20 – We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true.

It was a Friday, and as far as the world was concerned, it was like any other Friday. People were bustling about their routines—working or sleeping, buying or selling, eating, and drinking. Most of mankind was oblivious to the history-defining event unfolding on a hill on a small dot on the globe. While the world took care of its business, the most important business in history was occurring in a tiny place called Golgotha.

Here, beneath a darkened sky and amidst a mob blind to the cosmic significance of the spectacle before them, God was settling accounts with mankind for all time. The ground trembled as the weight of humanity’s sins was laid upon the shoulders of Christ, who hung, suffering and dying on a cross. Through His sacrificial death, an eternal transaction was initiated: “*God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting men’s trespasses against them*” (2 Corinthians 5:19). This transaction would be ratified when Christ rose from the dead the following Sunday, forever altering the fabric of history.

The transaction meant the power of God was officially unleashed upon mankind: the power of God's forgiveness, the power of God to renew, the power of God to indwell, the power of God to give eternal life. The power of God expressed through grace! It is a power that continues to transform the lives of men and women around the world each day. It is a power available to bring salvation *to everyone who believes* (Romans 1:16).