

- I. What's the Difference? — Final Talk
 - A. Welcome to Pathway.
 - B. And welcome to the finale of our summer series called **What's the Difference?**
 1. For twelve weeks we have asked one question: What's the difference between historic Biblical Christianity (evangelical Christianity, us), and what other systems and religions say.
 - C. My talk today is part 13, and with this we wrap it up.
 - D. I want to remind you today that answer to our question is not a system. Not a philosophy. Not a practice. Not a better moral code.
 - E. The answer is a Person.
 1. And that person stands ready to save you and deliver you and unleash you for the most abundant life you were created for.
 - F. My talk today is called: **Jesus is the Difference**
 1. Jesus is the difference. Who He is and what He did is so unparalleled that no religion that does not honor Him above all can even begin to compete.
 - a) Every other system gives you a teaching. Jesus gives you Himself.
 - b) Every other founder points a direction. Jesus IS the direction.
 - c) Every other sage says, "Follow this path." Jesus says, "I am the Way."
 - G. So bottom line... What's the Difference?
 - H. Actually, it's Who's the Difference... because the difference is Jesus. And specifically Jesus in his identity, Jesus in the fullest picture of an incomparable person painted in vibrant hues from cover to cover in Scripture.
 1. Catholicism points to Jesus: but hides behind layers of sacraments and masses, priesthoods and penance and purgatory. Scripture never does that.
 2. Eastern Orthodoxy points to Jesus: but confuses him with their teachings on *theosis* and tradition and holy mystery. Scripture never does that either.
 3. Mainline Protestantism claims Jesus: but displaces him with morality and social progress and political religion. Scripture never shows Jesus moving in these ways.
 4. Universalism respects Jesus: but demotes him because they say every road leads to heaven eventually. Not in Scripture.
 5. New Age makes Jesus one of many gurus. Not in Scripture either.
 6. Secularism/Atheism makes Jesus a nice example at best, or just another fake at worst. Anti-Scripture.
 7. Cults make Jesus less than what the Bible says, and more than what anybody else says, and claim that only they know what's missing.
 8. The world's religions deny Jesus and demand climbing, working, striving, purifying, submitting, extinguishing, improving, working, paying, sacrificing, and performing... to get whatever they say salvation is.
 - a) Every single religion says DO.
 - I. But along comes Jesus Christ to declare: DONE.
 1. It is Finished.
 2. Paid in Full.
 3. Once for All.
 4. That you might know that you have eternal life.
 - J. There's an episode in John where many followers are leaving Jesus. And Jesus asks his 12 disciples if they also want to go away.
 1. *"But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You [alone] have the words of eternal life.'" (John 6:68)*
 2. They're saying nobody else has what he has because nobody else is who he is.
 3. He's the difference.
 - K. How about today, let's focus on Jesus for a while.
 - L. We'll start in Mark 4:
- II. Scripture
 - A. *"On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side.' Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'" (Mark 4:35-38)*
- III. The Demoniac
 - A. Jesus has been teaching all day. Crowds pressing in. Parables about seeds and soil and harvest. By evening, He is tired. He tells His disciples, "Let us cross over to the other side."
 - B. They get in the boat. He falls asleep in the stern, on a pillow. This is a real man. A man who gets tired. A man who works until His body demands rest. A carpenter with calloused hands, asleep on a hard plank in the back of a fishing boat, with a pillow.
 - C. He was exhausted because He gave everything He had to people who needed Him. That is not a detail. That is Hebrews 4:15 in a fishing boat:
 1. *"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15)
 - D. He has been there. Every place you have been — every fear, every fatigue, every betrayal, every loneliness, every grief — He has been there. Not in theory. In skin.
 - E. A storm hits. It's a violent one. Waves are breaking over the gunwales. The boat is filling.
 1. These are experienced fishermen. They have survived storms on this lake before. And now even they are terrified.
 - F. They wake Him up. "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"
 - G. He stands. He looks at the wind. He speaks to the sea. "Peace, be still."

- H. Three words. The wind stops. The sea flattens. Dead calm. Instantly.
- I. Then He turns to His disciples. "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"
- J. They don't answer Him. They are staring at each other. Mark 4:41 says, "and they feared exceedingly." And they say to one another: "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"
- K. Here is a man. Obviously a man. Fully human. He got tired. He grabbed a pillow and took a nap. And then he got up and spoke to the storm and made it stop. And now they freak out.
 - 1. But "Who can this be?"
 - 2. The question that every religion on earth asks, but only biblical Christianity answers.
- IV. The Demonized Man
 - A. They arrive on the other side. A man comes running — not just running — he's screaming — running out of the tombs and out of his mind.
 - B. He had an unclean spirit. Demon possessed.
 - 1. In case you don't know it, the dark side is real.
 - C. He lived among the dead. They put chains on him, but he snapped them. A wild man. He cut himself with stones. He was matted in his own filth. Howling, bruised, broken.
 - D. Everyone had given up on him. He was beyond hope.
 - E. This man was the very reason Jesus insisted they cross the lake.
 - 1. And if you've ever been without hope, or loved someone without hope... Jesus crossed over for your sake too.
 - F. The man sees Jesus from a distance and comes running. Falls on his knees. The voice that comes out of this man's mouth is not his own. It is the voice of hell.
 - 1. "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me." (Mark 5:7)
 - G. Do you hear that? Even hell gets it right when everyone else gets it wrong.
 - 1. That should make you stop and listen.
 - 2. The disciples are still asking, "Who can this be?" Just because he calmed a storm.
 - 3. Now he's going nose to nose with demons.
 - H. "Then He asked him, 'What is your name?' And he answered, saying, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.'" (Mark 5:9)
 - 1. A Roman legion was six thousand soldiers.
 - 2. This poor man is literally carrying a whole army of darkness inside him. Clawing at his soul. Decimating his body. Suffocating his spirit.
 - 3. And Jesus — one man, no weapon, no ritual, no incantation — Jesus commands Legion, "Come out from this man."
 - 4. The demons flood out. They rush into a herd of pigs. Two thousand pigs rush down a cliff and drown. The man is free.
 - I. When the townspeople come, they find this wild man sitting. Sitting! Clothed. Washed. In his right mind. Listening to the words of Jesus.
 - J. Do you know what that looks like?
 - 1. That is what salvation looks like.
 - 2. That is what deliverance looks like.
 - 3. That is what Jesus does to a life no one else can fix.
 - 4. This is what Jesus is just waiting to do for you.
 - a) No system of philosophy produced that.
 - b) No penance. No purgatory.
 - c) No eightfold path.
 - d) No five pillars.
 - e) No karmic cycle.
 - f) No religion. No cult. No secret initiation.
 - 5. It was the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.
 - 6. He did that.
 - a) He put himself through the fiercest of storms to rescue the one hopeless person that the whole world had written off.
 - b) The man who had even given up on himself.
 - K. And the townspeople — they are not afraid of the demon-possessed man anymore. They are terrified of Jesus. They want him gone.
 - 1. The disciples fear Jesus for commanding the storm.
 - 2. The people fear Jesus for commanding the demons.
 - L. Why?
 - 1. Because they are meeting a person who is simply not manageable, not by threat, not by danger, not by bribery, not by seduction. He is not manageable.
 - 2. And even worse, dealing with him is not optional.
 - 3. He will show up where he is needed when he is needed like it or not.
 - a) What are you going to do with Jesus?
 - M. He crossed the lake for the man infested with evil spirits.
 - N. He crossed the boundary between heaven and earth for every woman and man infested by sin.
 - 1. The same power. The same compassion. The same Person. The same unstoppable descent into your life's wreckage.
- V. Jairus
 - A. Jesus gets back in the boat. Crosses back where he came from.

- B. A crowd is still waiting. A man pushes through — Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue. A man of status and importance.
 - 1. *"And begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.'"* (Mark 5:23)
- C. Jesus goes with him. The crowd presses in. And in that crowd, there is a woman. She has a sickness. She has been bleeding for twelve years.
 - 1. This becomes a story within a story.
 - 2. While Jairus watched his daughter grow from a baby into a young woman — birthday parties, first steps, braided hair, laughter in the kitchen — and now she's about to die. At his wits end, he leaves her bedside to find Jesus.
 - 3. And here is another woman, an older woman. this woman was bleeding.
 - 4. Twelve years (verse 25) of doctors who took her money and gave her nothing. Twelve years of being untouchable. Everything she touched became unclean. She could not be touched. She could not touch.
 - 5. She has one thought: "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."
 - 6. She reaches through the crowd. She touches the edge of His garment. Instantly, "the fountain of blood was dried up" (v. 29). She is healed.
 - a) *"And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?'"* (Mark 5:30)
 - 7. The disciples are confused. The crowd is crushing Him. Everybody's bumping into him.
 - 8. Question: are you just bumping into Jesus today, or are you reaching out to him?
 - a) Is he just interesting, or is he everything?
 - b) Do you turn to him for your power, your wholeness, your salvation, your healing?
 - c) Power has gone out of Him. Not metaphorically. Physically. Literally.
 - 9. While Jesus stops for her, Jairus's daughter is slipping away. Every second spent with the bleeding woman is a second Jairus's daughter loses.
 - a) The clock is ticking down.
 - 10. Two women. One reaching out for life. One losing life.
 - 11. Jesus turns. He sees her. She is trembling. She knows what happened to her. She falls down before Him and tells Him everything.
 - 12. He looks at her. The One who commands storms. The One who commands demons. Now he is the one who commands illness.
 - a) *"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."* (Mark 5:34)
 - 13. He calls her "Daughter."
 - a) She was a nameless, untouchable outcast. But to Jesus, her identity was FAMILY.
 - b) Christian, no matter how dirty, broken, or isolated you feel—He still calls you his family.
 - 14. No religion, no system comes close.
- D. And speaking of family, Jairus has a daughter, and while Jesus is still speaking, messengers arrive with the painful news:
 - 1. *"Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"* (Mark 5:35)
- E. Jairus is broken. Jesus says, "Do not be afraid; only believe."
- F. He goes to the house. The mourning has already started. Professional wailers. Flute players. The chaos of death.
- G. Jesus clears the room. He takes the girl's father and mother, and three disciples, and He goes in where the girl lies.
- H. He takes her hand. He speaks Aramaic — the language of home, not Hebrew, the language of a religious ritual.
- I. Mark left it untranslated so you can hear the actual sound of Jesus' voice—the tone a father uses to wake his child...
 - 1. *"Talitha, koumi." Little girl, I say to you, arise.* (Mark 5:41)
- J. Immediately. Not gradually. Not slowly. Immediately, the girl gets up and walks. Verse 42 tells us she is 12 years old.
- K. How long did the woman with an issue of blood suffer with her illness? Twelve years (v. 25). Mark is inviting us to compare the two stories.
 - 1. Twelve years ago, two life-changing events happened at the exact same time.
- L. In the home of Jairus—a wealthy, highly respected synagogue leader—a baby girl was born. For twelve years, she grew up surrounded by love, privilege, and religious respectability.
 - a) At the same time the girl was born, an unnamed woman began to bleed... some kind of hemorrhage.
 - b) For those same twelve years, while the little girl was growing and thriving, this woman was suffering and dying.
- M. The woman sought healing through medicine and doctors, and went bankrupt trying. Human modalities didn't work. The science of the day didn't work. Nothing worked.
 - 1. The ruler of the synagogue sought healing through prayers and offerings and sacrifices. Religious modalities didn't work. Nothing worked.
 - 2. Do you see the only thing that worked? They had to come to Jesus. And so do you. And so do I. Again and again and again and again.
 - 3. Because only Jesus can save. Only Jesus can sanctify. Only Jesus can satisfy. Only Jesus can defeat the darkness. Only Jesus can forgive your sins. Only Jesus can give you peace. Only Jesus can give you meaning. Only Jesus has the words of eternal life. Because only Jesus is the Lord of Glory come down from heaven. And only Jesus loved you enough to endure the cross for your redemption, and give you the gift of salvation.
 - 4. And all of this because only Jesus—the Bible's Jesus, the unedited Jesus, only that Jesus—is Jesus.
- N. Under the letter of the law of Moses, uncleanness was highly contagious. If an unclean person touched you, you became unclean. But Jesus was touched by an unclean woman. Uncleanness should have entered him.

1. Under the letter of the law of Moses, if you touched a dead body, you became unclean. But when Jesus entered the home of Jairus, he touched the dead body of the little girl. Again, uncleanness should have entered him.
 - a) But when the bleeding woman touches Jesus, her uncleanness does not enter him. His power goes out and enters her and makes her whole.
2. And when Jesus enters the room of the dead girl, He does not stand back to avoid defilement. He walks right up, takes her cold, lifeless hand in His, and speaks life into her: "Talitha cumi."
 - a) Death does not contaminate Jesus; Jesus' life contaminates death and destroys it.
 - b) Because only Jesus has the words of eternal life

VI. Jesus is the difference.

- A. Every other religious founder on earth stayed dead. Today, their tombs are sacred shrines. Muhammad is still in Medina. The Buddha was cremated. Confucius is buried in Qufu. They lived, they taught, they died, and they stayed in the ground.
- B. But Jesus of Nazareth lived, died, and walked out of His own grave under his own power. Our Savior is not in a tomb; He is on a throne.
- C. He is not a sterile philosophical system.
 1. He is the unmanageable, untamable God-man.
 2. He is the only One who could get exhausted and fall asleep on a wooden plank in a storm, and then stand up and command the cyclone to be still.
 3. He is the only One who looked at proud religious hypocrites and called them a brood of vipers, yet looked at an unclean, bleeding outcast and called her "Daughter."
- D. Let's stop comparing and start beholding. Look at the difference:
 1. Roman Catholicism says: sacraments and penance and purgatory — but Jesus says: "It is finished."
 2. Eastern Orthodoxy says: theosis and tradition and holy mystery — but Jesus says: "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
 3. Mainline Protestantism says: morality and social progress and decent religion — but Jesus says: "You must be born again."
 4. Universalism says: everyone gets home eventually, so it does not matter what you believe — but Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
 5. New Age says: you are God, and the answer is within — but Jesus says: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness."
 6. The mystery religions say: secret knowledge for the initiated few — but Jesus says: "Whoever comes to Me I will never cast out."
 7. Secularism says: build your own meaning, be your own god — but Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life."
 8. The cults say: Jesus is less — a created being, a brother, a prophet — but Jesus says: "Before Abraham was, I AM."
 9. Buddhism says: extinguish the craving, dissolve the self — but Jesus says: "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."
 10. Hinduism says: balance the scales across a thousand lifetimes — but Jesus says: "By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."
 11. Islam says: submit and balance your deeds before a distant Judge — but Jesus says: "I submitted My will to the Father — for you. And the debt is already paid."

VII. From Complexity to Christ

- A. From complexity to Christ. From effort to faith. From proving to receiving. From legalism to grace. From climbing to being carried. From a thousand paths to One Person.
 1. *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- B. That is the trade. His righteousness for your sin. His life for your death. His blood for your debt. His name for every label that has owned you.
- C. He paid the debt you could not pay. Not with karma. Not with sacraments. Not with effort. With blood. His shed blood. On a cross. Once. Once for all.
 1. *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)
- D. Oh, I'm just trying to preach the name of Jesus today. Am I getting through at all?
- E. Take all the stories. Take all the religions. Take all the rules, the rituals, the hoops to jump through, the penances, and the sacraments. And for the last time be done with them.
- F. Set them all alongside these marvelously beautiful, utterly incomparable, matchlessly simple words ever to flow from the lips of the Savior:
 1. *"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to celebrate."* (Luke 15:22-24)
- G. Only Jesus.
- H. Only Jesus.
- I. Only Jesus.
- J. **What's the Difference? Only Jesus.**