

# Jesus Unfiltered

## Session 1: Who is Jesus Christ?

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning men. If you would, please turn in your Bibles to John chapter one. I need a clicker.

We're going to start a new series this morning. The name of the series is going to be Jesus Unfiltered. I guess we're going to rewind and do this again. It happens, right? Thank you. Yeah, the title of the series is Jesus Unfiltered. Our first message is going to be: Who is Jesus Christ? We want to begin by doing a shout out.

We're going to greet a group of men who meet here locally out in Oviedo Cross Life Church. They're led by Keith Brantley, who used to be a regular part of our Bible study and then decided to start a video Bible study out at the church. Then, my own brother-in-law, Randy Crestina is part of that group. He's actually the one who put this forward this morning. Iron Sharpens iron. They meet on Fridays at seven with us.

They say "we desire to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the verse, Second Peter 3:18, so that we can make a difference for others."

This is a great group, a very close group to us, of course. I wonder if you join me in giving a very warm and rousing welcome to Iron Sharpens Iron. One, two, three, hoo rah. Welcome men. Glad to have you with us.

Yes. Today, who is Jesus Christ? We have a goal for this series. Basically, what we want to do is help get closer to Jesus Christ. I would like to help you and I'd like to encourage you to help each other to get closer to Jesus Christ, but especially as a friend of Jesus and as one of the children of God.

In so doing that, we want to basically increase your sense of well-being, confidence in your relationship with God and then release the power of God for your further transformation. Those are some pretty lofty goals. I don't usually do this. You don't have to jot down all of things in each of the circles because we'll go through them one by one, but I wanted to kind of overview this particular message to you.

First, we're going to look at what do we know and how do we know it and then we'll move to the second circle, why that shouldn't be so hard to believe, but can be. Then, third thing is, we'll look at figuring out a next right step that can help you get closer in this relationship. A deeper relationship, again, the goal of the series.

### **WHAT DO WE KNOW AND HOW DO WE KNOW IT**

First up is, what do we know and how do we know it? Jesus Christ, the son of Mary and Joseph Christ. Actually, most of you, of course know that that's not the case, but for those of you ... There are people

certainly here and I'm quite certain, people on line who don't understand that Christ is not actually the last name of Jesus, but it is a title of Jesus. It is a role that he played. That word 'Christ' is also a New Testament synonym to an Old Testament word. That Old Testament word, by the way, is what? Anointed one. That's the definition. The word 'Messiah'. In the Old Testament, when you see the word 'Messiah', the anointed one, who is coming, the Messiah who is going to come into the world and save the world, then the Christ is the exact same thing. The Christ is Jesus in his role as the anointed one, or the Messiah.

The starting point for a series like this would be ... Where do you start, right? Where do you start? We have a man in Jesus who is more well known and more has been written and more talked about than all of the other great men combined. You take Lincoln, Gandhi, Aristotle, anything that's been ever said or written about them, total all that and it's still a drop in the ocean compared to what's been said about Jesus Christ. What we're going to do is we're going to start at the beginning, John chapter one, verse one. Let's read together and we'll make a couple comments as we go.

"In the beginning", and this is by John, it's so transparent. Just in the world of common sense, since Genesis one began with the words "In the beginning", in the world of common sense, it makes complete sense that John has sought to parallel the beginning of the Old Testament here in his Gospel.

"In the beginning was the Word." This is 'Logos'. "In the beginning was the Word". I'm going to go ahead and tell you if you don't already know it that John here is referencing Jesus Christ. We'll see this here in a moment, but he is referencing Jesus Christ and he's calling Jesus Christ 'The Logos'.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God". In other words he's saying that Jesus was with God in the beginning and, "The word was God". He's actually saying that Jesus not only was with God, but that he was God. Then he repeats in the second verse, "He was with God in the beginning. Through Him", now, he's referring again to 'The Logos', "Through Him, all things remain".

He moves immediately to the deity of Jesus Christ. He is seeking to establish the deity of Jesus by putting Him with God in the beginning, equating Him to be God Himself and then also, now, as the Creator. Through him, nothing was made that has been made. Without him, nothing was made that has been made.

"In Him was life". This is the Greek word 'Zoe'. All of life and all of it's fullness, both here and eternally and forever. "In Him was life and that life was the light of men".

"The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. Jesus is referred to as The Light or The Illumination, if you will, of the life that is both full and rich and abundant here and lasts forever.

Verse six, "There came a man from God", sent by God, "Whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light", that illumination of this eternal life, "So that through him, all men might believe". John was a forerunner.

There's a very interesting ... We'll get to it a little bit later. "He himself was not the light", John, "He came as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world."

He was in the world. Now we're back to Jesus. "Though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him." That is because God decided to reduce himself to human flesh for a season, if you can understand that and figure that out. Check with me later, but actually, it's not that hard to comprehend. I'm getting back into the second circle a little bit right now. It's not really that hard to comprehend because you think about your own self. Where did you come from? You came from nowhere. Now, here you are, meat, flesh, bones, life, breathing, eating, loving, caring, working, sharing, all these things that you do, but when you think about it, it's no more mysterious about Jesus than it is mysterious about you.

The great question of the ages, one of the greatest questions of the ages.

[Phone]: You'll need to connect to the internet first.

Patrick Morley: Oh, okay. I guess I said the wrong thing. Sorry. See you later. Hey Siri, are you a Christian? No, just kidding.

[Phone]: I wish I could help, but you don't seem to be connected to the internet.

Patrick Morley: I wish I could help, but you don't seem to be connected to the internet.

The greatest mystery of all is, why is there something instead of nothing? Why is there you instead of non-you? Why is there a cosmos instead of nothing? Why is there a God instead of nothing, but then what is nothing if there's not ... Anyway, it's very quick that you can exhaust all human knowledge with a single question, why is there something instead of nothing? That's not our purpose this morning, but John is addressing all of this in his Gospel.

"He was in the world", verse ten, "And though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive him. Yet, to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in his name", and that word 'Believe' will be the dominant word for this series, at least out of the Gospel of John, "He gave the right to become anthropos, He gave the right to become children of God."

Now we move from anthropos, just being mankind, to actually being children of God. When you believe in His name, the simplicity of believing in the name of Jesus, you become ... There's a genetic DNA therapy that takes place. You have your spiritual DNA gets replaced. If they ran a paternity test on you today, they would say that you are, my goodness, you are a son of God. You are a child of God. It's an adoption process, but it's a phenomenal thing. We'll, of course get into all this a bit more as we move in through the series. This is a pretty good overview. Again, looking here more at the deity of Jesus than anything else.

"He gave the right to become children of God", verse 13, "Children born, not of natural descent, nor of human decision or of a husband's will, but born of God." Then we'll stop with this verse in John 1. "The Word", this word, this Logos, this creator, this person who was with God in the beginning, who was God in the beginning, through whom everything that's created has been made, this word, this Logos became flesh and lived for a while among us. "We have seen His glory", John writes, "The glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father full of grace and truth."

What do we know and how do we know it? Actually, we know quite a bit. Most of what we know about Jesus, almost all of what we know about Jesus emanates from the Word of God. We know there are maybe about half a dozen references to Christ or Christianity. Two references to Jesus Christ in extrabiblical literature. One of them is in Josephus, who happened to be a Jewish historian. Then, the other was Tacitus, who happened to be a Roman senator and historian. Let's just take a look at one. Which one do I want to read?

Let's do Josephus. There arose, at this time, a source of further trouble in one, Jesus. A wise man who performed surprising works, this is somebody who is not a Christian, a teacher of men who gladly welcomed strange things. You people are people who gladly welcome strange things. I already knew that. I didn't need Josephus for that. He led away many Jews, meaning proselytized many Jews, and also many of the Gentiles.

He was the so-called 'Christ', Josephus being full aware of what that meant, when Pilate, acting on information supplied by the chief men around us, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, condemned him to the cross. Those who had attached themselves to him, at first, did not cease to cause trouble. The tribe of Christians, which has taken this time from him, is not extinct, even today. His dates are 37 to 100. Decades after these Christians, the 'Sect', as he called them, had not ceased to exist.

What do we know and how do we know it? We know a lot about the deity of Jesus Christ. As you will see in the days ahead, of course what we know about Jesus mostly we know because of what is in the Word of God and specifically what Jesus has said, but of course all the Word of God are the words of Jesus because Jesus is God, as we have just been talking about. I'm going to give you the power six verses here, they're at the top of the outline.

Colossians chapter one, verse ... These are my verses, man. These are my verses. I love these verses. Colossians 1:15. He is the image of the invisible God. When you have seen Jesus, you have actually seen a physical image of the invisible God.

Colossians 2:8, "In Him dwells all the fullness of the God head". All that is in God, all that God is about, the whole thing, in Him dwells all the fullness, or the pleroma, of the God head in bodily form.

Then Hebrews chapter ... I don't have that sheet in front of me. Hebrews chapter one, verse three, "He is the radiance of God's glory", watch this, "And the exact representation of his nature." The exact representation of his nature. Character, we get the word 'Character' from this Greek word 'Character'. The exact representation. He is the character. He is the imprint, some of your versions might say, of His nature, of His being. He is the exact representation of God's being.

When we see Jesus, we see God. We see God! This is what the Bible claims. What do we know and how do we know it? Who is Jesus Christ? We know it from what we see in Jesus. Then, Jesus goes on to say, John 14:6, "I am The Way and The Truth and The Life", the same life that's being talked about that the light shines on. "I am The Way, The Truth, The Life. No one comes to the father except through me."

Then in verse nine, he says, "He", he says, "He who has" ... Watch this. This is Jesus. What do we know and how do we know it? Who is Jesus Christ? He who has seen me has seen the Father. Why? Because he's the exact representation of His being because in Him dwells all the fullness of the God head in a bodily form, because he is the image of the invisible God.

When we see Jesus and get to know Jesus, we are getting to know all of God in a human body. Then he says in John 10:30, said, "I and the Father are one". I and the Father are one. I guess that was before the proper grammar would have been "The father and I are one".

The Big Idea for, really probably for the series, but certainly for today, the best person to answer questions about Jesus is Jesus. **The best person to answer questions about Jesus is Jesus.**

### **WHY THAT SHOULDN'T BE SO HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT CAN BE**

Now, just a little bit about why that shouldn't be so hard to believe, but can be. You know from your own personal life, you know from the lives of family members, you know from the lives of people that you have talked to it can be difficult. It looks like it is so transparent, but ... It should be easy to believe when you ... We'll look at manuscript evidence. The evidence for the Bible is, it's almost ... It's certainly exponentially more than the evidence for any other piece of historical literature.

The Dead Sea Scrolls alone ought to be enough to convince almost anybody. If you just look at it. 1947, a Bedouin teenager, tossed a rock in a cave over in Qumran. I've been there. Some of you probably even have seen those caves. Tossed a rock and was a little surprised when he heard a plunk and a cracking sound. He went down to investigate and they found these, when we call now 'The Dead Sea Scrolls'. We have the entire Bible represented in these Dead Sea Scrolls except the book of Esther. There's a complete manuscript of Isaiah.

Here's the thing, all of these manuscripts, and that was the science ... The science of the day was applied to the Bible. You probably knew this, but the science of that day was mostly applied to the study of the Bible and the reproduction of the Bible. They had copyists and they would count the number of letters from the beginning to the middle of the Bible to make sure they had zero ... It's a very phenomenal study to see the voracity of the process of the preservation of the Bible. Not the voracity of what's in the Bible, just the truth of the preservation of the Bible is unparalleled.

We ended up with a book. All these books were transcribed about the time of Christ. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls had been found, the oldest manuscript that we had of Isaiah, the one of which we have the entire and some of the books, the entire manuscript, was 1000 A.D. This discovery had predated the earliest manuscript that we had by 1000 years. Guess what? They said exactly the same thing. Exactly the same thing, letter for letter, word for word.

It's an amazing piece of evidence. That's the kind of thing you get into when you get into why it shouldn't be so hard to believe when you start looking at manuscript evidence, or for example, when you start looking at the testimony of other people. There's this little book by a woman named Jennifer Nagel. It's called 'Knowledge'. She talks about testimony. I probably should've thumbed the page.

By the way, one of the things that makes it hard to believe is just this problem of epistemology. How many of you are familiar with the word, have at least heard the word 'Epistemology'? Alright, a few of you. How many of you have heard, know enough about epistemology to actually give a definition of it? Anybody? Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. It's the theory of how do we know things. How do you differentiate between something that is an opinion and something that is a fact? This is perhaps the anchor of all philosophical thought is how do we know things. In fact, for most people who don't, are not able to put their faith in Jesus, in most cases, and I'm going to conjecture here, but in my experience

I'm just going to say, in most cases it's not a problem that ... I like my life. I don't need God, or it's not so much, although there are plenty people like that. Hey look, I'm leading a moral life. My life's fine. I don't need God. You see men like that, right, but not that many. Then you have all kinds of other situations. We'll get to them, but from my perspective, most men that have struggled with believing in Jesus, have an epistemological problem. How can I know for sure? How can I overcome my doubts?

One of the ways you do that is with manuscript evidence. You look at the evidence. Another way is the testimony of witnesses. In her little book, *Knowledge*, Jennifer Nagel talks about ... That testimony can never be 100% certain. There are some, John Locke, who would say that testimony is, has no value, because people get it wrong, but she lives in the world of common sense. She notes that you have to take into account the factors that surround that evidence. Number one, the number of witnesses. Look at the number of witnesses to Christianity. Their integrity.

One of the things that makes it difficult to believe, why it shouldn't be hard, but it can be, is just how many kooks we have running around and how stupid they can appear to be in political elections or industry or guys that are Christians that are married and then they run off with and do something foolish in the moral area, whether it's, has to do with money or it has to do with sex or whatever the case may be.

The number of witnesses, their integrity, their skill. Then when you look at Handel. For unto us a child is born. You look at some of the great composers, the great thinkers, the great writers, the great philosophers, the great theologians, just the great military leaders who have put their faith and belief in Jesus. The number of witness, their integrity, skill, the purpose they have in supplying their report. Why are people testifying to this? The internal consistency of what's conveyed. Oh my gosh, the internal consistency of the Bible.

I am now finishing my 30th year of reading through the Bible, cover to cover, once a year. I am astounded. I cannot find anything that is not internally consistent. I can't find it. Now, I find a lot of things that are mysterious that I don't understand that raise more questions. That's why, another thing that can make it hard to believe is just how much mystery there is in the Bible, but I've never found anything that is inconsistent. I've had people try to trip me up and I've tried to trip up myself. I think the Devil has tried to trip me up and all of those things.

For example, the two thieves on the cross. One of them ... First, one version says they both curse him and the other version says one of them says, "Lord, remember me when you come into your glory." It looks like it's not consistent until you think about it.

I was thinking about it one day. I said, "Oh, that's pretty easy. One of them changed his mind." Yeah, they're both hanging there, they're both cursing Him. They're seeing what is happening in front of them and then one of them changes his mind. Problem resolved. I've never found an inconsistency.

Then, our sixth factor here is whether there is any contrary testimony. It's quite interesting. We have a lot of attacks, if you will, but we don't really have any testimony to disprove the miracles, the wonders and signs, the benefits in society and culture. Everybody who doesn't believe in Jesus would nevertheless definitely want to make sure the church stayed in place of what the body of Christ does for homeless people, for HIV victims, for people who are in the hospital and need visitation, for medical

assistance overseas, for disaster relief. You bet. We may not believe, but we certainly appreciate the benefits. These are just a few of the things.

Let's see how much time Siri says I have left. That was a funny thing. I got a new phone. I need to figure that out for the next time I guess.

Then, there's spiritual warfare that makes it difficult to believe because every time a little something that happens that seems a little consistent in your life, you pray for something, it doesn't happen and then the next thing you know, he's all over you. He's just all over you trying to build doubt. Spiritual warfare is a huge thing that makes it sometimes difficult to believe.

Then, just the fact that I'm a serial sinner. Paul talked about it, Romans seven. We've talked about it here before. What I want to do, I don't do and that what I don't want to do, I do. You just see this.

One morning, I was coming here to teach you men and this was back in the day when my wife actually got up to pray with me, she doesn't do that before, before I come over and she said, "What are you talking about today?" I said, "I am so excited because today I'm going to be talking about the problem of repetitive sin." She said, "Oh, I guess you'll be speaking without notes then."

Again, the all of this, the best person we're going to be able to find to answer these questions about Jesus is going to be Jesus. Then, just finally, what's the next step that you might get you a little bit closer.

#### **FIGURING OUT THE NEXT STEP TO GET YOU CLOSER**

First of all, it's this problem of epistemology. You might have these doubts, so I think I should start there. I've mentioned this book, Knowledge, by Jennifer Nagel but I want to tell you that she has a YouTube video, she has a series, but she has a YouTube video on epistemology. It's an introduction to epistemology. The cookie is in the bottom shelf. I understood it so I know you can understand it. You can put in 'Epistemology, Jennifer Nagel' into YouTube and watch that video. I think it's six minutes or so and give you a tremendous overview and a lot of confidence for overcoming this problem of, "Can I believe this? Can I trust this?" She'll help you live in the world of common sense, because the problem in epistemology is not whether or not we can believe, that's really not the problem. The problem is that there have been so many radical skeptics that have been involved in philosophy through the years including Descarte...

These people have introduced, not in the world of common sense, but in the world of radical skepticism, ideas that do make you wonder if you can really trust yourself to believe. That has filtered down through writers and commentators and novelists and everything and TV programs and movies. All around us there is this radical skepticism about what we can know and not know, but if you watch that little video, it would probably help you quite a bit.

Number two is, we've said it here before, a Bible, a group and serving someone else will solve 90% of your problems. If you want to take the next step to get closer to Jesus, just the idea of being in the word for yourself, being in a small group where you're really sharing life on life, getting real. I'm not talking about Bible study. I'm talking about life on life discipleship where you would obviously talk about the Bible, but you talk about what's really going on in your lives. Oh my gosh! The transformation that takes place when you do that is phenomenal. It's phenomenal. Then finally, serving someone else.

I tell the story so many times. I don't know how many times you've heard this one, but I loved that when I have my biggest pity party, first really big pity party after I became a Christian, my wife said, "You know what your problem is?" I said, "No, what's my problem." She said, "Your problem is that you are just so focused on yourself. You just need to get out of the house and go serve someone." I did. I went down to Frontline Outreach and got involved and bam, just like that, it was gone. The pity was gone. A Bible, a small group, and serving someone else will solve 90% of your problems.

Then, let's just talk about this Bible thing a little bit more. Let's talk about doing some spiritual disciplines. If you want to get closer to Jesus, if you want to deepen your relationship, TAWG. Time alone with God, TAWG. Time alone with God.

Me, just so you what I do. I don't know if you can do this or not, I don't even know if you'd want to do this or not, but I spend a couple hours a day, the first couple hours of the day with the Lord. Some days it's an hour. Some days it's three, but I spend a couple hours alone with the Lord each day.

A lot of things happen, spin out of that, I will admit, but ... I'll be sending an email to somebody or a text to somebody to say, "I'm just praying about your thing that you mentioned to me", but to spend a good ... Martin Luther once said, he said, "Gosh, I have so much to do today, I think I'm going to have to spend three hours in prayer."

Then, just the last thing because we are out of time ... You might want to do the one year Bible thing. I'm not going to do it anymore. I've decided I'm not going to do the one year Bible anymore. Thirty years. Next year, I'm going to read through the Gospels every 30 days. There are 90, 89 chapters in the Gospels. That's three chapters a day. I'm going to read through the Gospels 12 times next year. I'm doing that for me because the Lord has been saying to me, "I've been the words. I've been hearing words", because I'm one of those guys, "I've been hearing words. Focus more on Jesus." I've been hearing it so much I can't ignore it anymore. Focus more on Jesus. That's when I decided that I would read through the Gospels every month. Then, actually, out of that came the idea to do this series Jesus Unfiltered. Just the idea, focus more on Jesus.

We're out of time. I had some more things to talk about. We can talk about them some other time, but the Big Idea today **is the best person to answer questions about Jesus is Jesus**. That's what we're going to be looking at. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, our dearest Father, not even sure if I'm saying this the right way, but the One of whom Jesus is the only begotten son. We come to you today and we ask that you would help us understand the answer to the question, 'Who is Jesus Christ?' Today we've looked at his deity. We'll be looking at lots of more things about him. Help us to develop this closer relationship with Jesus, to be the friend of Jesus, to be a brother of Jesus as we are a child of you. We ask this in your name. Amen.