

# WATCHNIGHT SERVICE 2022—JESUS ONLY

JOHNSON CHUA • JOHNSONCHUAZH@GMAIL.COM

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## Matthew 17:1–8

*1 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. 3 And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. 4 And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." 5 He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." 8 And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.*

The passage from Matthew chapter 17 verses 1 to 8 describes for us two sets of emotions which the disciples experienced on the mount of transfiguration—initially one of excitement, leading to a proposed course of action, and subsequently one of being terrified, as God’s voice spoke to them out of the bright cloud. But the remedy to each situation was similar, where in the first instance, instead of getting carried away with unbridled and mis-informed fervour, they were reminded to listen to the words and instructions of the Lord Himself. In the latter,



as the disciples were terrified, the personal presence and touch of the Lord instructed them to ‘rise and have no fear’; and as they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but **Jesus Only**.

Brothers and sisters, as we stand at the threshold of 2023, we may find ourselves in a similar position as the disciples of old. Some of us may have had a brilliant 2022, have 2023 all planned and mapped out and are raring to go. For others, 2022 might have brought more than its fair share of difficulties and discouragements, with 2023 not looking like it's going to be much better. In reality, most of us might be somewhere between the two extremes—but

may we take heed in the words of scripture to keep our focus on **Jesus Only**.

Let us consider some verses which refer to the Lord Jesus as 'Jesus', and consider the practical applications these might have to us. We will consider these under four headers:

- 1) Jesus saves
- 2) Jesus supreme
- 3) Jesus soothes
- 4) Jesus secures

### 1. Jesus Saves

#### **Matthew 1:21**

*She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*

A consideration of 'Jesus' cannot neglect this well-known verse; for the Lord Jesus came to save His people from their sins.

If anyone reading this, young or old, has not gone to the Lord Jesus to have their sins forgiven, and receive Him as their Saviour, I urge you not to delay any further. The Lord Jesus is God incarnate, and He came into this world to die on the cross, to lay down His life as our substitute, that we might have the opportunity to have our sins forgiven, and an assurance of an eternity with God in heaven forever.

For those of us who own Him as Saviour, it is good to reflect on our own salvation. To consider the goodness, grace, and mercy of God in giving His Son to redeem us, as well as His ongoing faithfulness in sustaining us through our pilgrimage here on this earth. These should serve to anchor us in our faith, never taking

God's goodness for granted, and to remind us of His everlasting love.

### 2. Jesus Supreme

#### **Luke 1:31–33**

*31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

#### **Philippians 2:9–11**

*9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

These verses in Luke and Philippians remind us of the very essence of Christ—He is the Son of the Most High, worthy of obedience and service. They also remind us of God's sure promises in Christ, that eventually every knee shall bow to Him, in worship, submission and obedience, to the glory of God the Father.

Most importantly, Philippians chapter 2 verse 11 also states clearly that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. As believers in the Lord Jesus, we call Him our Saviour—but do we also own Him as our Lord? Our salvation is secure, but how many of us view this as a ticket to heaven, proceeding to live life in accordance with our own ideas and priorities?

As the little phrase goes—Jesus Christ is either Lord of all, or not at all.

What are the priorities in our lives? Are our plans and ambitions subservient to the glory and will of God in our lives? Or are we simply pushing our own agenda, and using the Lord's name as a 'rubber stamp'?

### 3. Jesus Soothes

#### John 11:32–38

*32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' 37 But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?' 38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.*

#### John 13:23

*One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side*

These verses are very comforting.

John chapter 11 verses 32 to 38 describe the scene around Lazarus' death, and we are brought face to face with the Lord's humanity, emotions, and sympathy for this dear family. We read how He was deeply moved and greatly troubled, culminating in those two words—Jesus wept.

John chapter 13 verse 23 speaks of a disciple who is cognisant and appreciative of the Lord's love for himself, writing of himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

Dear saints, you are loved. You are loved and cherished by God Himself. God is love. We know this fact and there are numerous verses in the Bible that re-iterate God's love, presence, and provision for His people. But we easily fall into despondency and cry out 'woe is me' when troubles and trials come our way. Oh how often we shake our fist at God, and at those around us who try to support and help!

May we learn instead, to be like the apostle John, to always revel and stay in the love of God, to love God, and to know that we are loved by Him.

### 4. Jesus secures

#### Hebrews 12:1–2

*1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

We finally come to Hebrews chapter 12 verses 1 to 2, where we are called to run with endurance the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

The Christian life is not meant to be a smooth sailing one. We are ambassadors of Christ,

citizens of heaven. Our ambitions, values, passions should be heavenly-minded and not conformed to this world. Therefore, we are called to run with endurance—the ability to persevere through an unpleasant or difficult situation without giving way, or the capacity of something to last, or to withstand wear and tear.

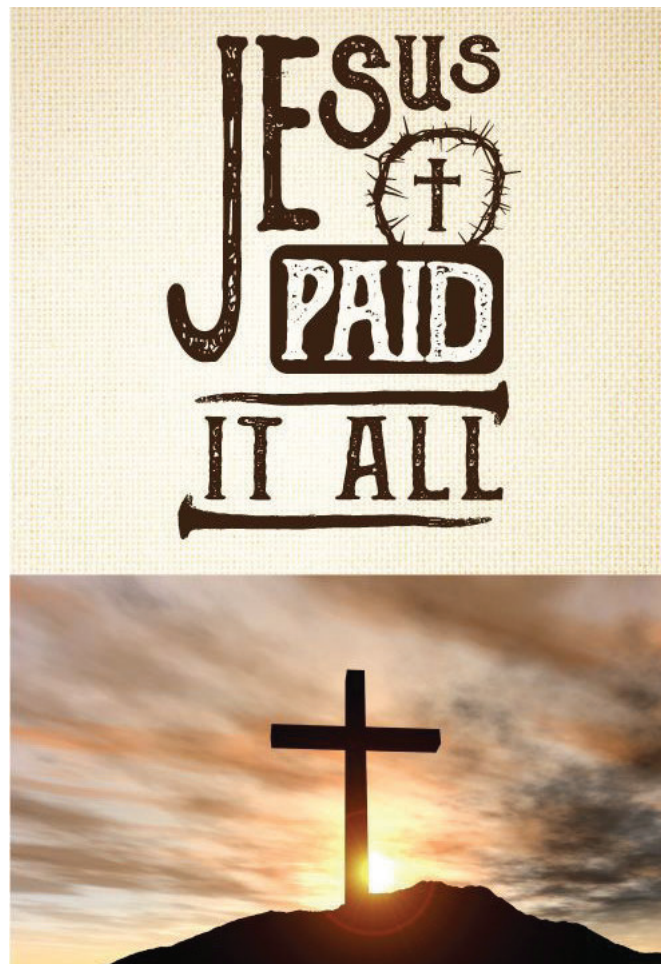
We started by considering how Jesus saves, and that our sins are forgiven as we repent and come to the Lord Jesus. Additionally, we considered that the Christian life is about a consistent, on-going walk with the Lord, consisting of an increasing appreciation of, and dedication to our Lord Jesus.

If you're anything like me, you will agree that as we go through our Christian life, we fall and fail our Lord, which is why Hebrews chapter 12 verses 1 to 2 is so relevant—we are called to recognise and lay aside every weight and the sin which clings so closely to us, and to run with endurance.

Do we spend time recognising the weights and sins which cling so closely to us? To be honest with ourselves and God, and be willing to confess, repent and relinquish the things weighing us down and holding back our progress for God?

How is your endurance? Are you weary and heavy laden, lumbered with a load of care? Take heart, dear saint—lift up your eyes, look unto Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. He has endured the cross, despised the shame, and secured the victory—He is seated on the right hand of the throne of God, from where He is interceding for each of us.

Moreover, Philippians chapter 1 verse 6 also



encourages us to be rest assured that He 'who began a good work in [us] will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ'. Let us never give up, and keep going on for the Lord, one step and day at a time.

In conclusion, as we enter 2023, let us do so with our eyes fixed firmly on **Jesus Only**, recognising that it is He alone who saves, is supreme, soothes and secures. And as we continue to meditate upon these thoughts, may the Spirit of God apply the Word to convict and enable us to 'pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness'; 'fight the good fight of the faith'; and 'take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses' (1 Tim. 6:11–12).

Maranatha.