

Amazed by Jesus

Introduction/Series Overview

This six-week series is a clarion call to return to our first love. We will move from the crib through Jesus' teaching and ministry, to the cross and the resurrection, and the promise of His return, exploring the multifaceted names of Jesus to restore our awe and wonder. The sermon series has been inspired and shaped by the book 'Amazed by Jesus' written by Simon Ponsonby in which he himself reflects upon those moments in the gospels when the disciples and crowds were 'amazed'. 'Amazing' or 'amazed' seems to be a frequently used word in many forms of media communication these days, describing someone or something out of the ordinary and something of high achievement. Simon Ponsonby himself explores the use of the word in the gospels by way of introduction,

The gospel writer Mark uses two different words to convey the sense of amazement - and actually both appear five times, ten times in all. And both convey a sense of physical response to what they are seeing and hearing. One word is *thambeo* - from the Greek root *tremor* from which we get our word 'to tremble'. When it says they were amazed, it is with this sense of trembling. The other word is *ekpliso*, and it means to strike with a blow. It is translated 'they were amazed', but it means: 'They had the senses knocked out of them.' They were overwhelmed; Jesus knocked them sideways, and he does that.

These notes are by no means prescriptive. The notes are supported by YouTube links to worship songs you can use with the words added in the resources section so that members of the Life group can follow if they wish. The notes run in parallel with the sermon series. However, Sunday sermons may well take you on other important tangents and that is great! the worship/prayer ideas may or may not be appropriate for your group. You discern what is best! The key theme is about embracing that sense of wonder and astonishment in the person, teaching, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. These are offered as a way of getting started on the various subjects.

Jesus is amazing....

How can we capture Niagara Falls in a tea-cup? We can't...

How can we convey the glory of God in Christ Jesus in words? We can't...

We're left with aching jaws in wonder, in amazement, and in wonderment.

(August 2026)

Week 1: The Scandal of the Cradle (The Incarnation)

(Background reading in Amazed by Jesus – chapters 1-6)

Focus

Rediscovering the wonder of God becoming man—the mystery of the Word made flesh.

Welcome

- Either: Bring a 'show and tell' object that has led you to wonder and astonishment. Share with the rest of the group.
- Or: What is something in the natural world that recently left you feeling completely full of awe or wonder?

Word (Read Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 1:21-23)

We are often desensitized by cosy Christmas imagery. The reality that the Creator contracted Himself into a vulnerable, human embryo is the most scandalous, awe-inspiring event in history. In Amazed by Jesus, Ponsonby emphasizes that Jesus is "God come to us, to be God with us." The infinite God confined Himself and accommodated Himself to a human womb and a dusty cradle.

Discussion Questions

1. As individuals and the Church, we can easily lose our "first love" and view Jesus through routine rather than wonder. In what areas of your faith has Jesus become "familiar" rather than "amazing"?
2. That Jesus as a baby could inspire worship and devotion from shepherds and magi/wise men suggests a power greater than earthly rule. What was sacrificial about the response of the shepherds and the wise men?
3. Reflect on Jesus as Immanuel ("God with us"). How does knowing that the High King of Heaven understands human limitations change how you pray during tough times?
4. Jesus chose to enter our world in humility (the crib) rather than political or military dominance. How should this model of humility impact how we handle power, rights, or status in our daily relationships?

Worship & Prayer

- Either, play the song, 'So will I (100 billionX) by Hillsong Worship
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfVd5x9W1Xc>
- And/Or simply use the verse of scripture, Hebrews 4:15, to lead you into worship and prayer.
- Perhaps spend time praising Jesus specifically for His decision to leave heavenly glory for us.
- Pray for a renewed spiritual vision to see Him clearly this week.

Week 2: The Truth that sets you free (The Ministry & Character of Jesus)

(Background reading in Amazed by Jesus – chapters 7-8 and 11)

Focus

Jesus as Prophet and Life-Giver. Exploring how Jesus satisfies our deepest spiritual thirst and guides our daily steps.

Welcome

- What is your ultimate comfort food or comfort activity when you are exhausted?

Word (Read John 4:7-14 and John 7:1-52)

Jesus is not a safe therapeutic teacher. He acts as a radical prophet who cuts through our cultural pretences, exposes our deepest spiritual thirst, and satisfies it completely with His 'I am' authority. Simon Ponsonby explores the multi-faceted names of Jesus found in Scripture, focusing heavily on Him as the Living Water and the Good Shepherd. Jesus does not just offer us instructions; He offers us Himself to satisfy our souls and protect our lives.

Discussion Questions

1. John, in His gospel, recalls Jesus' challenge to his listeners to "go deeper and truly experience the living water." What are some of the broken "cisterns" or worldly things we turn to when our souls feel spiritually dry?
2. Look at how Jesus interacted with individuals (like the woman at the well). What stands out to you most about His perfect balance of divine truth and human empathy?
3. In John 7:37-39, Jesus speaks of 'thirst' and 'rivers of living water' flowing from a person. What does this transformation look like or seem like for a person? Can you share a story of this happening to you?

Worship & Prayer

- Pray for group members who are currently experiencing a dry spiritual season.
- Ask Jesus to open up fresh springs of joy and satisfaction in your lives this week.
- Finish with this challenge and invitation by the famous Baptist preacher,

C.H.Spurgeon:

Ask God to make you all that the Spirit of God can make you, not only a satisfied believer who has drunk for himself, but a useful believer who overflows the neighbourhood with blessing...(seeing visitors in church) what a blessing it would be if they went back to their respective churches overflowing; for there are numbers of churches that need flooding; they are dry as a barn-floor, and little dew ever falls on them. Oh that they might be flooded! The Lord send to all our churches a great springtide! ... So may it be! ... may all of you who hear me this day get your share of the streams. Oh, that the Lord may now fill you and send you home bearing a flood of grace with you.

Week 3: The Shepherd in your midst (Known by name)

(Background reading in Amazed by Jesus – chapters 13 & 17)

Focus

Contemplating Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Welcome

- Share a time when you have felt someone has spoken God's word to you. How did you respond to it? Did you check it out?

Word (Read Matthew 9:36, John 10:1-21 and Philippians 2:5-11)

Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep by name. How do you distinguish the voice of the True Shepherd from the "noise" and conflicting voices of modern culture? True power is revealed in ultimate humility. We look at the beautiful practice of a Saviour who fiercely protects us like a shepherd, yet humbles Himself to serve us like a slave.

Discussion Questions

1. When Jesus surveyed the crowds and saw that they were like 'sheep without a shepherd', how might Jesus view our culture or society today?
2. Jesus spoke about sheep hearing the voice of the shepherd and being 'known by name'. Is this an experience that you have of God? How does God assure us of these things?
3. In what areas of your life are you tempted to listen to "thieves" or "hired hands" (e.g., culture, false security, toxic relationships)?
4. What does an "abundant life" mean in a spiritual context, rather than a material one?
5. How does the relationship between the Father and the Son mirror the relationship between Jesus and His followers?

Worship & Prayer

- Either, play the worship song, '[The Lord's my shepherd \(I will trust in you alone\)](#)' or have someone read Psalm 23.
- Let these words lead you to pray for someone who feels anger or despair that no-one cares for them. Think through how your prayer might lead to action in some way.

Week 4: Surely this man was the son of God (The Cross and the Suffering Servant)

(Background reading in Amazed by Jesus – chapters 13 & 14)

Focus

Gazing upon and contemplating Jesus' death on the cross. The ultimate sacrifice offered by ultimate love.

Welcome

Have you ever had the experience of speaking about the death of Jesus on the cross and what it means? Was it an easy conversation or did it prove difficult and frustrating?

Isaiah 53:3-7 and Mark 15:33-39

The Isaiah reading and the gospel accounts track Jesus all the way to the cross, showing Him as the Lamb of God. We cannot be amazed by grace until we are undone by the cross. This week looks at the brutal, breathtaking substitute of Christ taking on our sin to win our freedom. We are invited to slow down and be still at the foot of the cross, to practise holy reflection, asking ourselves daily where we have met the Lord and where we have missed Him.

Discussion Questions

1. There are seven recorded sayings of Jesus as he slowly died on the cross. What could be considered amazing by each of them? (Luke 23:34; Luke 23:43; John 19:26-27; Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34; John 19:28; John 19:30; Luke 23:46)
2. It is easy to look at the cross as an abstract theological concept. What image or statement from the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion breaks through your routine and has the greatest impact on you? How does the meaning of the cross move from 'the head to the heart'?
3. Jesus was rejected and abandoned so that we would never have to be. How does the reality of the cross heal our personal wounds of rejection, failure, guilt or shame?
4. How can we intentionally keep the sacrifice of Jesus at the centre of our hectic weekly schedules?

Worship & Prayer

Either, play the song 'Servant King' by Graham Kendrick

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCAdWs-ZyEk>

And/ Or, read the lyrics of the song. Let this song lead you into prayers of thankfulness.

Perhaps allow some of the lyrics to inspire your prayers. Pray for a deeper sense and understanding of Jesus' sacrifice for us.

Week 5: The Resurrection (A New Life)

(Background reading in Amazed by Jesus – chapters 15 & 16)

Focus

Living in the power of the empty tomb and the resurrection

Welcome

- If you could instantly know the exact future outcome of one personal situation right now, what would it be?

Word (Read Matthew 28:1-10; Luke 24:13–43 and 1 Corinthians 15:12-20)

The response of those who met Jesus or witnessed His work was consistently profound amazement. Yet, on Easter morning, no one actually expected Him to rise.

Discussion Questions

1. When the women and disciples first encountered the empty tomb, their reaction was shock, fear and profound amazement. Why do you think Christ's closest followers struggled to expect the Resurrection, despite Him telling them beforehand?
2. Mary Magdalene did not recognise Jesus until He called her by name (John 20:16). Similarly, the disciples on the Road to Emmaus recognised Him during the breaking of bread. Why do you think the resurrected Jesus chose to reveal Himself through personal, intimate moments rather than a massive public display?
3. How does knowing Jesus as the "Lord of Life" who conquered the grave change the way you view current hardships, grief, or personal fear of death?
4. What area of your life currently feels like a 'graveyard' (eg. A broken relationship, a dead dream, a persistent sin)? How does the physical reality of Jesus' resurrection bring living hope to that specific situation?
5. There is a danger in perceiving or believing that Jesus merely *employs* us in ministry, a trap that professional ministers and long-term churchgoers fall into. Jesus would prefer to amaze us in relationship. How can your church or small group move away from functional "duty" and back into the transforming power of Easter joy?

Worship & Prayer

The Risen Jesus walks with us just as He did with the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). In prayer, reflect on where we 'met the Lord and where we missed Him' during this past day. Give thanks for the amazing presence of Jesus in these moments.

Pray for the resurrection hope to impact and transform your own relationships with families, friends and neighbours. Pray for one aspect of our wider community in Malvern that you would like to see transformed with resurrection hope.

Week 6: The Returning King (The Ultimate Hope)

(Background reading in Amazed by Jesus – chapters 18 & postscript)

Focus

Living in the light of Jesus' return.

Word (Read Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 19:11-16 and Titus 2:11-13)

Our study of the amazing Jesus Christ continues by moving from the resurrection to the glorious promise that He will come again. Jesus changed—and is actively changing—everything; He is the reigning High King of Heaven.

1. The scriptures point us to the future prospect of Christ's glory filling the earth. How does keeping an eye on His eventual return change the way you view global chaos or political instability?
2. How do you interpret the two passages from Revelation and Paul's letter to Titus? Each of these scriptures possess a particular historical context. Reflect on the purpose that lies behind each scripture. What do they teach us now in the present?
3. Jesus will return as a Judge. Does this prospect excite you, encourage you or worry you?
4. How has your personal view of Jesus expanded over the last six weeks? What will you do to keep from losing this wonder?

Worship & Prayer

If possible, have a copy of 'The Light of the World' by Holman Hunt available for the group to look at.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Light_of_the_World_%28Hunt%29

Simon Ponsonby finishes the book with this conclusion. 'Jesus is amazing. He stands at the door of our lives, and knocks, and knocks for he desires to come in and be with us. Don't keep him waiting. Open the door of your mind, your heart, your life, and say, 'Please Jesus come in'.

Allow the group time to share what they see in the image.

Finish by playing the meditation, 'Jesus is amazing' which you can find on this link.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6iTVyp2o_A&t=28s

Share the grace with each other.

So Will I (100 billion X)

God of creation
There at the start
Before the beginning of time
With no point of reference
You spoke to the dark
And fleshed out the wonder of light

CHORUS 1:
And as You speak
A hundred billion galaxies are born
In the vapour of Your breath the planets form
If the stars were made to worship so will I
I can see Your heart in everything You've made
Every burning star
A signal fire of grace
If creation sings Your praises so will I

VERSE 2:
God of Your promise
You don't speak in vain
No syllable empty or void
For once You have spoken
All nature and science
Follow the sound of Your voice

CHORUS 2:
And as You speak
A hundred billion creatures catch Your breath
Evolving in pursuit of what You said
If it all reveals Your nature so will I
I can see Your heart in everything You say
Every painted sky
A canvas of Your grace
If creation still obeys You so will I

BRIDGE:
If the stars were made to worship so will I
If the mountains bow in reverence so will I
If the oceans roar Your greatness so will I
For if everything exists to lift You high so will I

If the wind goes where You send it so will I
If the rocks cry out in silence so will I
If the sum of all our praises still falls shy
Then we'll sing again a hundred billion times

VERSE 3:
God of salvation
You chased down my heart
Through all of my failure and pride
On a hill You created
The light of the world
Abandoned in darkness to die

CHORUS 3:

And as You speak
A hundred billion failures disappear
Where You lost Your life so I could find it here
If You left the grave behind You so will I
I can see Your heart in everything You've done
Every part designed in a work of art called love
If You gladly chose surrender so will I

I can see Your heart
Eight billion different ways
Every precious one
A child You died to save
If You gave Your life to love them so will I

Like You would again a hundred billion times
But what measure could amount to Your desire
You're the One who never leaves the one behind

--

'So Will I (100 Billion X)'

Words and Music by Joel Houston, Benjamin Hastings & Michael Fatkin

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CCLI song: 7084123

The Lord's my shepherd (I will trust in you alone)

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want
He makes me lie in pastures green
He leads me by the still, still waters
His goodness restores my soul

And I will trust in You alone
And I will trust in You alone
For Your endless mercy follows me
Your goodness will lead me home

He guides my ways in righteousness
And He anoints my head with oil
And my cup, it overflows with joy
I feast on His pure delights

And I will trust in You alone
And I will trust in You alone
For Your endless mercy follows me
Your goodness will lead me home

And though I walk the darkest path
I will not fear the evil one
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know

And I will trust in You alone
And I will trust in You alone
For Your endless mercy follows me
Your goodness will lead me home

And I will trust in You alone
And I will trust in You alone
For Your endless mercy follows me
Your goodness will lead me home (for Your endless mercy)
For Your endless mercy follows me
Your goodness will lead me home

Source: [Musixmatch](#)

Songwriters: *Stuart Townend / Aaron Keyes*

The Lord's My Shepherd (Psalm 23) lyrics © Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publ., Birdwing Music, Jam One Music, Ears To Hear Music, Thankyou Music, Thank You Music Ltd., Dennis Emmanuel Brown Music, Getty Music Hymns And Songs

The Servant King

From heaven you came helpless babe
Entered our world, your glory veiled
Not to be served but to serve
And give Your life that we might live

This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King

There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said

Come see His hands and His feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving

(Extra section added 2013)
We bring our lives to you
A sacrifice for you
In view of love so true
We are changed, renewed

Graham Kendrick
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Jesus is Amazing

Consider these things:

He reigned divine in unapproachable light and incomparable glory
He created all things and kept them going by his powerful word
He was endlessly worshipped and adored by myriad upon myriad of angels
He overflowed in restless love and created humans in his image to love
He created a paradise and gave himself to man in a garden of delights
He gave us free will so that we might love him back in freedom
He did not turn away when we turned away
He kept advancing toward us
He covered our shame
He excluded them from the garden and went forward with them
He never gave up on us, never rejected us, never stopped loving us

He revealed himself in creation and conscience, in words & wonders
He chased us through the corridors and contours of history
He chose his servant Israel to reveal his glory to the world
He graced us with sacrifice and law so we could stand before him
He prophesied & prepared and planned his particular coming in person
He is amazing

He wed himself to human flesh in virgin's womb –
He took upon himself our very nature so he might give his nature to us
He dwelt among us, one of us, and drank the earthly cup to its lees
And aged thirty, he left obscurity, and began his public ministry
And he spoke as no man ever spoke before
And people who heard him were amazed and some afraid & some angry
And he called people to leave all and follow him ...
And he said he was bringing the kingdom of God
And he showed us he was the king of the kingdom
And he showed us that his was a kind kingdom
And he showed us his was a powerful kingdom
And he gave us the keys of the kingdom

And he forgave the sins of the adulterous woman and cripple who walked
And he tenderly touched the leper and healed their skin and removed shame
And he bent double with compassion at the suffering he saw in others
And he raised the dead boy and gave him back to his mother
And he raised the dead girl and gave her back to her father
And he raised his dead friend, and gave him back to his sisters
And he opened the eyes of the blind and he opened ears of the deaf
And he opened the prisons of the tormented
And he opened the minds of the questioning
And he opened the way for us to God

Now that is amazing

And he fed 5000 hungry pilgrims with five small loaves and two fish
And he commanded the wind and waves to obey him and they did
And he ordered the shadows to depart from troubled souls and they did

And he taught us to pray to God as Father
And he called his disciples his friends
And he had a special heart for those on the margins
And he was homeless with no-where to lay his head

And he was transfigured and revealed in all his glory
And he wept at the tomb of his friend
And he made friends with tax collectors and sinners & betrayers
And he loved the Rich young ruler who loved his money more than God
And he turned over the tables in the Temple of those who would profit from worship or prohibit prayer
And he prayed for us to be protected and loved and know God's glory
And he gave us bread and wine to join with him and each other
He is amazing

And he intimidated the authorities – and he provoked his enemies
And wicked men and evil spirits conspired to kill him
And he faced down the fear and embraced his destiny
And welcomed the betrayer with a kiss, and still called him friend
And scheming men sat in judgment
And they condemned and spat, and beat and nailed, and killed him
And he died a willing ransom for our sins
And he who knew no sin became sin for us
And he entered god-forsakenness for our sake
And by his stripes we are healed

And he drenched the earth with his blood, not anyone else's
And he washed us whiter than snow
And his executors said "Truly, this man was the son of God"
And they laid him in a stone-cold tomb
And he descended to the depths
And he set the captives free
And he shattered the bonds of death
And he had the last word as he pushed the stone away
And he cancelled the debt of sin
And he Satisfied the justice of God
And he Redeemed us from death & hell
And he reconciled us to God
And he disarmed the demonic
And he brought us home
Isn't he amazing?

And ascended to heaven to sit beside the Father in our stead
And he sent us his Spirit's power to be with us forever
And he asks for nothing from us but faith and love
And he sent us out to tell others of his love
And he is praying for us – right now
And he is coming back to be with us
And he will judge the living and the dead

And he will wipe away all our tears, and heal our wounded years and drive away our fears
And he will fully finally vanquish all evil
And he will make all things right
Meanwhile he's still healing, still cleansing, still delivering, still inviting, still transforming – still for us.

And today 2 billion follow him – and many millions suffer for faith
And one day the whole earth will be covered with his glory
And he is called Jesus which means God saves us
And he is The Lord – God over us
And he is Emmanuel, God who is here for us

Yes, he is amazing