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Good morning. Children may be dismissed at Children's Church. Let's start with some prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you for the wonderful Son that you have given for us. Thank you for this amazing, undeserved gift, for this love. As we dig into your Word now, God, please open it up to our minds and our understanding. Help us to see what it is you're saying. Help us to learn and grow and become more like the people that you created us to be. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen. Well, this is the second Sunday of Advent, known as the Preparation Sunday, where we think about the world being prepared for the coming of Jesus, and also preparing our own hearts to receive Him. This morning I'm going to speak, I'm just going to give a brief message, and then we're going to have a video message from our incoming pastor, Keith, on the screen. But to begin with, last week I spoke on the four aspects of Christ, and these are reflected in prophecy in the Bible, in Ezekiel, before Jesus was born, and in Revelation afterwards. We see these images of the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle, and that represents Jesus the King, Jesus the Servant, Jesus the Man, and Jesus the Son of God. And we also see those four aspects in the four Gospels. Matthew presents Him as the King, Mark the Servant, Luke the Man, and John the Son of God. This morning we're going to, last week we talked about Matthew presenting Him as the King. This week we're going to talk about how Mark presents Him as the Servant, the Suffering Servant. Now to begin with, the reason that you don't hear the book of Matthew quoted much during the holiday season is because, I'm sorry, the book of Mark. Mark isn't quoted much during the holiday season because he skips right over the birth and genealogy of Jesus and gets right to the point where Jesus appears getting baptized and starts His ministry. And when your focus is on demonstrating that Jesus is a servant, then this makes perfect sense. You don't really care about the servant's genealogy. You don't care about the servant's birth. I'm sure that a lot of you have very nice, fancy, when company comes over drinking cups at your home, and you probably know what fancy material they're made out of and where they were made and who designed them and all this stuff. And then you've also got Dixie cups that you rinse out your mouth with after you brush your teeth and you chug the water, you crush it, you throw it in the trash. You don't care what tree it was made out of or what forest it was harvested from because that cup is just there to serve. It's not fancy or important. And so it's the same with Mark's telling of Jesus. He skips the birth, he skips the genealogy, just like you would for a humble servant. In addition, more than 40% of the book of Mark deals with Christ's final, painful week on earth. Mark's focused on the suffering servant Jesus, and so that's why most of Him is dealing with crucifixion and skips over the birth. You see, Mark wrote his gospel at a time when Rome had become persecuting Christians. And so Mark wanted to write this book to all the persecuted, suffering Christians out there and let them know, "Hey, Jesus was abused and mistreated just like us. He can identify with you and your suffering." Hebrews chapter 4 verses 15 and 16 say, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but he was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." I know that it's the Christmas season and that everybody's supposed to be happy and everything, but maybe some of you are going through a tough time right now. Or maybe you went through a tough time in your past and the hurt and the wounds from that have not healed. Jesus wants to heal you. We have a God who understands us. We have a God who walked in our shoes. He knows what we're going through. He may not have exactly the same circumstances that you have walked through, but he knows hurt. He knows loss. He knows abandonment. He knows abasement. And he can sympathize with you and he wants to heal you and get you through whatever it is you've gone through. So approach him in prayer. Yet so many of us guard our hurt. We protect our hurt. It's a source of pride for us. We say, "Well, you've never been through it, so you just wouldn't know." And we're proud of that. And when I say Jesus knows what you're going through, the thought that pops into your head is not me. He doesn't understand me. He's never been through what I've gone through. Yes, he does. He has been through it. In fact, even more so. The King of Heaven, creator of Heaven and Earth, creator of you and me, comes down here and gets abused and mistreated and killed by his creation, his children. We will never understand the level of hurt and suffering that he went through. He definitely understands what you're going through. It's us who cannot understand what he went through. His suffering was greater than anything we'll ever know. And yet, he loves us. He forgives us. And he cares for you. So my message today is simply this. Come to him. Open up to him all of the hurts and pains and stuff that you're going through or that you've been through. And say, "Jesus, I'm sorry for holding on to these. I want you to heal these. I want to become restored and whole and new again in my life. I want to be the creation that you intended for me to be." Heavenly Father, please help us to let go of the hurts that we've held on to. Help us to realize that you have suffered and been through so much more than we have ever been through. So much more than we can imagine. The perfect Almighty dying on a cross for our sins. Help us to realize that you do identify with us. That you do know what we're going through. Help us to see that you can and will heal us. That it is your joy and your desire to restore us and make us whole and new again. Make us new like newborn babies in this Christmas season. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen. Give me one second and we're going to get Keith's message set up.