**JESUS VS**

Welcome back to our sermon series “Jesus Vs”

God will fight for you.

We’ve looked at several comic book villains over the past few weeks and asked how would they stand up in a fight with our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Let’s review:
Thanos the merciless titan – mercy triumphs over judgment & Jesus has all power

Uatu The Watcher – Inactive God; Jesus is active: He pleads, forgives, redeems

Galactus the Devourer of Worlds – Insufficient God; Jesus is all-sufficient self-sufficient, Jesus sustains us

Venom – the symbiote of sin; the Sinless One has defeated sin but Jesus is also able to save and redeem the person bonded to sin

We’ve talked about a lot of powerful characters: cosmic powers, planet consuming powers, powers over time and space

But there is one type of super power that we haven’t really addressed – mental powers

We were looking at villains who had mind-control powers:
Purple Man – Zebediah Killgrave
The Shadow King
The Puppet Master

But we decided to go with someone who is a little more well-known, although he is not a villain…

**JESUS VS PROFESSOR X**

Prof. Charles Xavier is the leader of the X-men. He’s confined to a wheelchair, but he has incredible mental powers.
He first appeared in X-men #1 back in 1963.
He’s recently been portrayed in movies by Sir Patrick Steward and James McAvoy

The X-men have been a popular super group for a long time. They were popular when I was a kid, but when my friends and I pretended to be the X-men I don’t remember anyone wanting to be Prof. X.

There have been several X-men video games, but I don’t remember any where you play as Prof. X. His powers weren’t really exciting. He’s not very physically imposing. His body is weak, but his powers are incredibly strong.

**Professor Charles Xavier**

He is said to possess the most powerful brain in existence, to be the world’s greatest telepath, and possesses vast psionic powers:

Telepathy – able to read minds and project his own thoughts into minds of others within a radius of 250 miles. With Cerebro he could connect to every mind on the planet

Telepathic Illusion

Mind Control

Mental Amnesia

Mental Manipulation

Psychic Blasts (Scanners)

Enemies wear helmets to protect themselves

Genius Intelligence

He could basically control the world (or kill everyone).

Fortunately, he is a good guy.

He works for peace and equality between humans and mutants. He leads his team of X-men to protect innocent lives.

That’s not to say he doesn’t have his faults:
He has been a manipulator
Illuminati
He has accidentally hurt people with his powers
Onslaught

But for the most part he is a good guy and works to do good.

How does he compare to our previous villains?

Like Thanos he could just wipe out everyone he doesn’t like.
In God Loves Man Kills people tried to get him to do that
He realizes that is merciless and unjust.

Unlike Uatu he is not inactive. He tends to lead from the sidelines, but he gets involved in adventures at times. And when not fighting super-villains he gets involved in the fight for human/mutant rights.

He is not self-sufficient; he has to eat and breathe. But unlike Galactus he doesn’t have to eat planets. He uses his powers and his leadership to help sustain the people around him.

He is not sinless. He has made mistakes and occasionally done bad things in his past. But unlike Venom, he actively works to separate himself from his “dark side” i.e. his sin nature.

So can we all agree that Professor X poses a different sort-of challenge than the previous villains we’ve looked at.

But why would they fight? Professor X is a good guy.
I think this would be a different kind of battle. They wouldn’t fight directly.
(Who could really stand up to a fight with the God of all creation?)

I think theirs would be a battle of leadership.
What type of leader would you want?

Professor X is a good leader. But he is a controlling leader.

Professor X could control every single person on the planet, and then the world would be perfect, right?

Some people want a controlling leader. “I just wish someone would tell me what to do.”

Some people want to be a controlling leader. “If these people would just do it my way…”

Lots of people, lots of Christians, believe God is a controlling leader.
God is all powerful and all knowing. He must be in control of everything.
If you believe that, please stick with me, I would like the opportunity to try to change your mind.

Now this will get into some big subjects predestination, free-will, etc.
If you have questions text them to 214-856-0550

**GOD IS IN CONTROL (?)**

It can be comforting to think that God is in control and everything happens for a reason.

In part it is reassuring to think that our mistakes were really part of Gods master plan.

But if God is controlling everything, then that has some awful implications.

If God is controlling everything then why would God fight for us?
We know from our scripture memory passage last month:

**EXODUS 14:14 NIV** The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.

If everything were under His control, why would He need to fight for us? Everything is going according to plan.

God doesn’t want bad things to happen. Tragedy and suffering are not part of God’s plan. They are not tools He uses to get what He ultimately wants. God doesn’t cause atrocities.

Suffering and pain are caused by sin. They are a part of this world because this world is broken because of sin. But if God is in control of everything then God created sin, and God causes sin.

God did not create people to go to Hell. If God controls everything then He created countless numbers of people knowing they would go to Hell, and he’s okay with that.

**1 PETER 3:9 NIV** The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

If God controls everything, including us, then we cannot love. If we are forced to love, if it’s not our choice, then it is not really love.

And how could God love us if we are just a machine programmed to do what he wants? But we know that God loves and we love.

**1 JOHN 4:19 NIV** We love because He first loved us.

God doesn’t control everything. Could God control everything? Yes.

But God does not control everything because

**LOVE REQUIRES FREEDOM**

In order to truly be able to love, we have to be free to choose not to love.

God is a big fan of freedom. God created us to be free.

**JOHN 8:31 NIV** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

**JOHN 8:32 NIV** Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

**JOHN 8:34 NIV** Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

**JOHN 8:36 NIV** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

God wants us to be free. Jesus died to set us free. But if we are actually under the complete control of an external entity, they we are not free.

Jesus can do everything that Professor X can do.

**Psalm 139:1 NIV** O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

**Psalm 139:2 NIV** You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

Jesus could read our minds. He could control us completely, but chooses not to.

**THE LIBERATOR VS THE CONTROLLER**

So a fight between Jesus and Professor X is really a fight between the Liberator and the controller.

Any of the mind-controlling bad-guys I mentioned could control people.
Professor X would hopefully do it with good intentions.

But a lot of suffering and evil have been caused by people who were given the power to control others and exercised that power thinking they were helping people.

Professor X may have a genius level intellect, but even he doesn’t have the wisdom to control everyone and have it work out well. (He wisely chooses not to.)

Jesus is the only one with the wisdom to be able to control everyone.
But He chooses not to because He loves us, He wants us to love Him, and He wants us to be free.

**GOD IS IN CONTROL (?)**

But if God is God how can He not be in control of everything?

I used to think that God had to be in control of everything.

But the all-powerful God has the power to limit himself to allow us to make our own choices.

God allows us the freedom to make bad choices.

He is wise enough and powerful enough to know that our bad choices cannot defeat his plan.

God is active in the world and in our lives, but He wants us to first choose to invite Him into our lives, into our hearts, and into our minds.

God does not control us, but He is always present to help us and guide us through the problems we face in this broken world.

A controller like Professor X would give you no choice. They would make you do it their way. But Jesus doesn’t force himself upon us. Jesus offers us His way, and His way is the only way that works. Jesus is the way.

Jesus is our model. Jesus had free will, but He submitted His will to God the Father. “Thy will be done.”

It may seem backward or counter-intuitive, but while we have free will we find true freedom when we submit ourselves to Christ and try to follow Him.

When we receive Christ we can also receive His Spirit.

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:11 NIV** For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:15 NIV** The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,

**1 CORINTHIANS 2:15 NIV** for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” **But we have the mind of Christ.**

Jesus doesn’t force His mind upon us, but He offers it to us. He offers us His Spirit to help us and to guide us. He gives us access to it, but still gives us the freedom to choose what we do. \*\*\*MUSICIAN\*\*\*

The truth is that this world wants to control us. The things of this world want to control us. Sin wants to control us. God wants us to be free.

**ROMANS 12:2 NIV** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

**THE LIBERATOR VS THE CONTROLLER**

Lots of things can control us if we let them.

If you want to find someone or something to control you, they are easy to find.

But if you want Jesus to control you. He won’t do that. He loves you too much.

It is only through submitting to God that we find true freedom.

Turn from sin. Repent. Turn to God and seek His will.

His will is for you to be free.