

JESUS ON TRIAL

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we confess before you that sometimes we don't really know how to read your word in the context of the opinions of others.

They can make us maybe a little bit hesitant or a little bit embarrassed when passages of your word seem to go against what people around us want to be true.

So, Father, we can confess before you that there can be a hesitancy and a timidity in our Christian walk.

Father, we ask that you help us not to be timid. We ask, Father, that you would gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and help us to be humble and bold, that you would help us, Father, to be gracious but also very clear, that you would help us, Father, rather than being intimidated by our context, that you would help us to pray for those around us.

Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Lead us and guide us into all truth. Help us, Father, to seek to hear your word clearly and simply so that it might come into our lives and bear much fruit in our daily lives, all for your glory.

[1 : 1 6] And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So here's the problem with this text.

Are the Jewish people Christ killers? Quite simply, bluntly. Are the Jewish people Christ killers? And is the Gospel of Luke inherently anti-Semitic?

Now, some of you are maybe a bit shocked that I would even raise this question in a church. But you know what? Given what's gone on in Western history over the last 2,000 years, given the well-documented history of anti-Semitism by many, many people, but unfortunately, regrettably, also by people who call themselves Christians, how can we not listen to a text like this, which seems to illustrate the Jewish people overriding the justice of Rome to demand the death of Jesus?

How can we not listen to this text within the context of a history of anti-Semitism? At the same time, we have to be very, very aware as we read this text that we live in a city where it's probably the case that anti-Semitism is on the rise.

And as I mentioned several weeks ago, we're virtually next door to the university, and unfortunately, in Canada and in North America at this time, universities are often hotbeds of anti-Semitism, places where, in fact, there are attempts to silence, marginalize, and intimidate people who are Jewish.

[3 : 0 5] One of the things I was very conscious of this week is not only that I have Jewish friends as I was reading this text, but also that I have people that I know that in conversation with them, I suspect that they have a fair amount of anti-Semitism.

Fortunately, these aren't people who are Christians, but still. And I think to myself, if I was to sit down in a Bible study and we were to read this text, how would I feel if there were lots of Jewish friends listening in?

And how would I feel with people who have anti-Semitism coursing through their veins and in their minds as we read this text? So let's look at the text with this big question in the back of our mind.

In fact, this text raises lots of other questions, but we begin with this one. So is this text showing that the Jewish people are Christ killers, which is part of the ancient roots in Christian circles or justification in Christian circles for anti-Semitism?

Let's look at the text. Luke 23, in case you were wondering where the text was. Then the whole company, as I explained a few minutes ago, that's all of the people who, I didn't turn my watch on, sorry about that.

[4 : 23] I will do that right now. So that's the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leaders. Then the whole company of them arose and brought Jesus before Pilate. And they began to accuse Jesus, saying, we found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar and saying that he himself is Christ a king.

Just sort of pause here. There are two types of things to understand, two things to understand as we're going forward. The first one is that at that time, the Jewish people are a subject people under the Roman power.

And so the Jewish people, as an over what, only I think one exception, did not have the ability to perform a capital sentence.

And this was definitely, Jesus didn't come under any type of even remote thing for Jewish power to have him executed. And so they're going to have to get the Romans to find Jesus guilty of something that the Romans cared about so that Jesus could be executed.

So that's what's going on. And so what they've done is they take these, and Luke is very, very carefully summarized in one little verse, the three charges that they bring against Jesus that they hope will make Pilate very, very concerned about Jesus.

[5 : 42] And the three charges are, in verse 2, we found this man misleading our nation. That's the first thing. In other words, he's causing trouble. He's leading the nation astray. He's causing unrest and uncertainty.

And, of course, within this, with this idea that he's leading them astray and causing turmoil, the Romans who are concerned with peace and Romans who are concerned that the Jewish people would contentedly stay under Roman rule, they're hoping that that would get Pilate's attention.

The second is that he is claiming to, he's forbidding to give tribute to Caesar. In other words, that he's saying that they shouldn't pay taxes, especially taxes that show that Rome are the nation over the Jewish people.

And then, finally, that he's claiming to be Christ, a king. These are the three charges that they bring. In summary, Luke summarizes them. I'm sure it probably took 20 minutes or whatever for them to talk about it, but Luke summarizes it for us.

And these are all, in fact, things which, in fact, Pilate would be concerned about. But before we go any further, and this is part of us having a bit of a hint that this whole story isn't, in fact, painting the Jewish people as Christ killers.

[6 : 59] But if we're very, if we think about it for a second, I bet that for many of us, if we were to be very, very painfully honest with a mentor about some of the concerns we have about being a more committed follower of Jesus, or if we were to actually ask some people around us what were some of the things that would keep them from being a Christian, okay?

And if they were to actually be very, very comfortable and honest with us, what are the three, what are three things that many people would say would concern them about becoming a follower of Jesus, a fully committed follower of Jesus?

Well, you know, one of the things is that if they followed Jesus, he would lead them in directions that they don't want to go in terms of certain things about how they lived their lives.

That he would mislead them about sexuality. That he would probably mislead them and make them have to end up doing things with their time that they didn't really want to do.

Like, I don't know, like go in a small group, or, you know, like read the Bible, or good grief, go to church on a Sunday morning when there's so many better things that you could possibly do. And so for many people, their concern would be that Jesus would mislead them.

[8 : 13] The second thing is that many people would be concerned that if they became a follower of Jesus, that it would have an impact on how much money they had under their own control. I mean, good grief, those Christians are going to pass the offering plate.

I mean, good grief, some churches actually talk about tithing. Good grief, maybe if I followed Jesus, I'll have to end up being like Mother Teresa and having absolutely no money whatsoever. And how dare, you know, this whole thing about, you know, my money's my own.

If I give myself to Jesus, if I get closer to Jesus, it might mean that I have less money to spend it the way that I want. And what's the third thing? The third thing is that Jesus is going to demand some type of control of my time.

That he's going to, and I don't want to have, you know what, I'm trying to, many people will say, I'm trying to regain control of my own life. Maybe I'm trying to regain control of my life because of the wounds which haunt me, because of my fear of failure or my fear of success, or trying to get over things that my parents said about me, or trying to overcome limits to growth.

And I'm trying to get control, and I have a sense that if I get closer to Jesus, he's going to demand control. And isn't it very, very interesting that the three things that Luke summarizes as the Jewish charges, the charges that Rome should be interested, in fact, if you think about it for a second, are three of the things that keep many of us from wanting to get closer to Jesus and keep many people from wanting to think about Jesus as being the Savior and the Lord of their life.

[9 : 46] You see, here's the thing about the Bible. Here's the thing about the Bible. The Bible goes after the control center of our life in the context of the living God.

And if we let it, and if we listen to it very carefully, we'll realize that it's constantly challenging motivations, motivations that keep us from Jesus, and for those who are followers of Jesus, keep us still a little bit worried about being even more trusting and committed to following Jesus.

And with this, we realize one moment, there's probably something else going on here than justifying anti-Semitism, because this is talking about my pagan heart. And I'm of Irish descent.

That means I don't think I have any Jewish blood in me. My ancestors, as I like to joke, you know, when we first met the Romans, we would like to strip our clothes off, get naked, paint blue, and paint ourselves blue, and fight the Romans.

That's my, you know, my cultural heritage. But the Bible is actually sort of pinning me in this spot. And so verse 3, let's see how it goes.

[11 : 01] And Pilate asked Jesus, are you the king of the Jews? And Jesus answered him, you have said so, which is a polite form of Jesus saying, yes, I am.

Now, here's the first thing. And so from now on, from the rest of the text, as we read this text, we have to read the rest of the text, everything that happens with the fact that Jesus claims to be the king of the Jews.

And in fact, later on, if you go and you read through all of Luke chapter 23, to emphasize it, Luke records, there's probably a variety of things that were put on the cross.

And the way Luke summarizes what was put on the cross over the head of Jesus as Jesus is dying on the cross is that this is the king of the Jews. Andrew, if you could put up the first point. Jesus is the king of the Jews, so I need to pray that God will cleanse my heart from all anti-Semitism and all other types of prejudice and racism as well while we're at it.

Jesus dies as the king of the Jews. Jesus accepts the title of the king of the Jews. When Jesus returns in glory, he will, of course, be revealed as what he is, which is king of kings and lord of lords, but he will also be revealed as king of the Jews.

[12 : 24] He never renounces that role or that title. He bears it to the cross. He bears it to that place which is the power of God for salvation for all who believe, whether pagan or Jew.

And so, if we, in fact, have entrusted ourselves to the king of the Jews, how can we have within us any anti-Semitism at all?

How could that possibly be? And so, if we find any slight type of prejudice there about it, and once we become, and see, this is the powerful thing, this is the way the gospel works, that as the gospel convicts us of a certain type of prejudice, it convicts us of prejudice in general, because it's not saying, okay, I can be prejudiced against Jews, but I can be prejudiced against blacks or Chinese people or women or, you know, or gays, or I can be prejudiced against all these other, no, no, no, no, no, you see, this is the power of the gospel.

This is the power of Jesus. It isn't as if Christianity needs some infusion of some other type of philosophy to make us realize that prejudice and racism is wrong. We just listen to the scriptures.

In fact, I would maintain it would be a whole other topic that the most powerful force against racism and prejudice historically and to this day is the Christian faith. Even though many Christians fall short of it, it is the power of the gospel.

[14 : 02] And so, for the rest of the stuff that we read, all of the different dynamics that go on, remember that our own hearts have the same fears of these actors and that we are reading the story of the death of the king of the Jews, whom I, as a follower of Jesus, have put my hope and faith and trust in and therefore all anti-Semitism must be cleansed from me.

God have mercy upon me. So the story continues, verse five. But they were urgent. That's the Sanhedrin in the crowd. He stirs up the people teaching throughout all Judea from Galilee even to this place.

When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Jesus over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time.

This is just a very, very classic thing. How does a bureaucrat often deal with a problem? You have a problem, you've discovered that it could actually be somebody else's jurisdiction, and then you discover, oh boy, it's somebody I don't like.

So you kick the problem over to the person with the other jurisdiction to get it out of your hair. That's what Pilate does. And so he sends him over to Herod. And verse eight, when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desire to see him because he had heard about him and he was hoping to see some sign.

[15 : 28] That means a miracle done by him. Now just sort of pause here. One of the things which you're going to see here is that one of the things which often happens for Christians is that they think, you know, I'm really bothered and troubled by this idea that Jesus' death was a sacrifice for sin.

It seems very old-fashioned. It seems pagan. It seems antiquated. It seems inhumane. And, you know, isn't it like, you know, what we should really think is we should have a desire for Jesus.

We should portray Jesus as a great teacher, as a great example, as a great model of how to live. And we should just think of all of the marvelous things he does. And that's the thing which should draw us to Jesus.

And it's a very, very common move in Christian circles and in Christian churches to downplay, to in fact actually maybe even deny that there's anything sacrificial about the death of Jesus upon the cross and focus on his life.

Focus on the red letter parts of the Bible. Focus on what he has to say about the poor. Focus on the wonderful things that he says about this and that and the miracle, you know, the wonderful things he did.

[16 : 37] And in a sense, Herod is that person. Herod is that person. He's heard about the wonderful things that Jesus does and he'd like to see Jesus do some wonderful things.

And then the story continues because Jesus actually doesn't satisfy him by trying to just do those wonderful things for him. Verse 8 again, when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad for he had long desired to see Jesus because he had heard about him and he was hoping to see some miracle done by Jesus.

So Herod questioned Jesus at some length, but Jesus made no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by vehemently accusing Jesus and Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him.

Then arraying him, that's Jesus, in splendid clothing, he sent Jesus back to Pilate and Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

Now just sort of pause here for a second. Is it reasonable to think that Jesus is primarily a good teacher, that he's primarily a wonderful example of how to live?

[17 : 46] Well, let's see how Pilate and Herod understand Jesus within that perspective in the next verse. Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people and said to them, you brought me this man as one who is misleading the people and after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him, neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us.

Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. I will therefore punish him and release him. Now just sort of pause here for a second. This is something which is very significant, both that he find Jesus completely and utterly innocent but also that they're just going to casually mock him and that they're going to casually just have him whipped.

And here's, and Andrew, if you could put up the next point, here's what Pilate found and I just used Pilate. I could have said Pilate and Herod but it sort of upset the flow of the sentence. But Pilate found Jesus to be an innocent, impractical, harmless fool.

In other words, someone that no one would want to follow or listen to. Pilate and Herod found Jesus to be an innocent, impractical, harmless fool.

In other words, someone that no one would want to follow or listen to. Now this might sound a little bit shocking to you, but if you think about it for a second, if Jesus is actually primarily an example, then why on earth did he die?

[19 : 22] Like what is that showing? And how is it that his whole behavior right now is showing anything worthy of us to follow? Like he doesn't say anything, he doesn't do anything to protect himself, is that the type of example that we want to model?

Like do we want to actually model somebody that when it comes down to the crunch is on one hand is recognized to be innocent but on the other hand given that he's also impractical, harmless and foolish and therefore we can do whatever we want with him, then why on earth would this actually be somebody that we actually wanted to follow?

Like, you see, what often happens, there's a very, very common claim about Christians that Christians are just always trying to model Jesus after their age and that's primarily the case when people want to turn Jesus no longer into the power of God for salvation to all who believe but want to make Jesus primarily an example for how to live and when people want to turn Jesus into an example about how to live and how his teaching is wise, they focus, we focus, on those parts of the teaching of Jesus that agree with the wisdom of the world and we focus on the examples of his life that are examples that our culture already teaches us and all of the other things in the Bible and all of the other things about Jesus that don't fit in with that, we ignore and in fact, we even lose any real desire to follow Jesus in his words because it'll keep bringing us up to these awkward, inconvenient things like the fact that he seems to be impractical and foolish and harmless and doesn't even take normal types of means to defend himself.

So what Herod and Pilate find and what the gospel shows is that when we on one hand think that we are exalting Jesus and making him more culturally relevant by holding him up as an example and as a guru and as a wise teacher, what we're really doing is demoting him and making him something which is someone who is very comfortable in whatever the culture has to be saying in this particular day and actually doesn't fit with the evidence.

The evidence of Herod and Pilate is that Jesus is innocent which is significant to us but he's harmless. He's impractical.

[21 : 52] You know what? He's a fool. And Herod acts like a typical Canadian. A typical Canadian is utilitarian.

Some of you have been to university and you know that's a particular ethical theory by which you say that amongst other things that what you do is you take the course of action, the moral action that you take is the one that creates the less pain.

And so what we're going to see in the rest of the text is that Herod, Pilate, is a utilitarian. That there's going to be a contrast between the potential of a riot starting up and even more importantly that people aren't going to like him and are going to undermine his authority and they're going to try to cause some trouble for him and on one hand you have that, on the other hand you have the death of an innocent harmless fool that no one in their right mind would want to follow.

And so Herod as a utilitarian is going to say it causes far less distress and far less pain in general if I can end and prevent a riot by the death of one innocent man who doesn't even have any followers around him anyway.

They've all fled, they're all in hiding. And that's what we're going to see happen here in the rest of the text. But they all cried out together, verse 18, away with this man and release to us Barabbas, a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder.

[23 : 23] Pilate addressed them once more desiring to release Jesus but they kept shouting, crucify, crucify him. A third time he said to them, why, what evil has he done?

I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him. But they were urgent demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified and their voices prevailed.

So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder for whom they asked but he delivered Jesus over to their will.

Just this final thing about the anti-Semitism. If you go back and, this is sort of the second to last, if you go back and look at Acts chapter 4, it's very, very clear that the Bible says that it's Pilate, Herod, everybody.

In fact, it's ultimately humanity which is implicated in the death of Jesus, not any particular group. Even looking for a particular group is actually an indication of anti-Semitism to actually even try to ask that type of question and apportion the blame and it's to completely and utterly misunderstand Jesus.

[24 : 29] Here we see that Pilate and the crowd are at one, that Pilate and the crowd are being cynical, they are being unjust, they are being immoral and they are being cruel.

They are being cynical because many in the crowd know that the charges against Jesus are false. Pilate knows that Jesus is an innocent man. They have a cynic, everything that's going on is just reeking with cynicism and it's unjust and it's cruel and it's immoral that they would go and that they would choose a person who actually is guilty of murder and is actually guilty of insurrection and is actually guilty of rebellion and that Pilate would even offer that as a choice to the crowd and that the crowd would choose that man and that Pilate would go along with it.

Everything about this whole story just reeks of cynicism, cruelty, immorality and injustice. But here is the profound question for us.

Andrew, could you put up the next one? Is God the Father the same as Pilate in the crowd? Unjust, cynical, immoral and cruel?

I mean, that's one of the things which motivates people who say that the whole idea of Jesus dying as a sacrifice is just not right. And so many might say, George, okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, maybe I, you have some problems in me trying to mainly say that Jesus, I should be like primarily a red-letter Christian and mainly concerned with some of the teaching of Jesus that I like and an example in Guru.

[26 : 06] But gosh, I mean, so it's that God's going along with this? God just goes ahead and lets the crowd do this? That Pilate's being cynical, unjust, immoral and cruel and that's like, isn't God picking Jesus as well?

And for many of us, and by the way, questions like this are often raised in academic literature.

It's maybe not as much heard in certain church circles as well. Maybe some of you have never come across this as a complaint and it can be a bit staggering to think about.

Here's the thing. One of the problems that we Christians have is that we've lost the habit of reading Bibles as, we read it as a series of quotes.

I'm all in favor of things like daily bread and stuff like that but often we just get a little bit of a snippet of a text or a bit of a chapter of a text and we move on to something else. And we've lost this habit of reading a book as a book.

[27 : 10] You know, we read movie, we watch movies, you know, most people, we try to watch the movie at the beginning and we watch it right through to the end and we see how themes develop and how things are prefigured or certain things are set in motion or certain comments reveal intentions in what's going on and we've lost that habit often when it comes to reading the gospel.

And so many of you, if you've been here over the months that we've been going through Luke, I've said that ever since Luke chapter 9 when Jesus says that he's going to go to Jerusalem to die upon the cross and rise from the dead, that every single thing in the gospel of Luke after that point, you have to realize that it's to be read in the context of Jesus' repeatedly saying that he's going to Jerusalem to die upon the cross and then he will rise from the dead.

And that's still at work here because he's in Jerusalem. But even more specifically, if you just turn back in your Bibles, on my page, I have to turn it back to Luke chapter 22. And Luke chapter 22 beginning at verse 39.

And Jesus has explained what's going to be happening to him in the institution of the Last Supper. Judas has gone off to betray Jesus and gather the soldiers. And Jesus is in the garden.

And I talked about this a couple of weeks ago, but we have to, everything that's happening right now, if we don't, this question that's on the stage, if this part of Luke's gospel wasn't there, then this would be a very good, that's an unanswerable question.

[28 : 42] But look what happens to Jesus. And he came out and went, verse 39, as was his custom to the Mount of Olives. And the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, pray that you may not enter into temptation.

And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. Everything that's happening after this, you will see, if you keep on reading, and there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him and being in agony, he prayed more earnestly and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

See, if Jesus is all just merely about love and teaching and examples, then it's really, the death of Jesus makes no sense. It's really, literally like, like some person coming up to you, you know, some guy coming up to a girl and says, I love you so much.

And the girl says, really? I love you so much. I'm going to show you how much I love you. And then takes out a gun and shoots himself in the head. That would be completely crazy and cruel if the woman would be in therapy maybe for years, need profound inner healing.

[29 : 59] And she would just say the man is sick. And if, if the death, if Jesus just says, you know, I love you so much and then boom, kills himself, that's completely crazy.

But you know, if, if you see somebody, if you, you know, periodically every, unfortunately about every year, there's several people who drown in the Ottawa River right near Ottawa. And if, and when you read about somebody who they don't even know the person, but they see a person in distress and they, they dive in and they swim and they get them back, we call them a hero.

And, and, and the greater, that the, the greater the risk and the greater self-knowledge before the act, the more that we consider it to be something completely and utterly praiseworthy.

That a person who knows that in that particular area that there are dangerous currents, but still they are going to do what they can to risk their own life to save that other person, we marvel at their courage.

We marvel at their sacrifice and at their risk. And when we hear of people who've gone into a house that's burning to rescue children and, and maybe even at the end they save all of the children, but then they are overcome by smoke themselves, we are overcome by their willingness to sacrifice themselves for children.

[31 : 15] And what we see here in the garden is Jesus understanding understanding completely and fully and massively the act of sacrifice and rescue and what it is going to cost him to undertake.

And part of him says, Father, if there's any way that this can be taken from me, please take it from me. And it is so, the magnitude of the fact that he is going to bear the wrath and justice of God in his very person, that he is going to, it's going to entail him no longer being at one with the Father, that it is going to entail him taking upon himself the doom that human beings deserve and he will offer human beings the destiny that he deserves.

He takes upon the doom that I deserve, he offers me the destiny that he deserves. And we see that full, clear-eyed struggle and the conclusion of it is, not my will, but yours be done.

And so, Andrew, if you could put up this, in the suffering and death of Jesus Messiah, we see revealed the deep justice, mercy, and grace of the living God working in perfect harmony with saving power for fallen humans.

in fact, Jewish people would see in this text a very, very powerful Old Testament image of atonement, of the scapegoat, that they would see within this that, in a sense, Jesus becomes the scapegoat by which the sins of the people are put, sorry, that the sins of the people are put on Jesus who dies and the scapegoat goes free, that Barabbas goes free, that the justice which is deserved in a sense falls upon another person so that the one who voluntarily takes that place, sorry, the one voluntarily takes that place of having the sin and the wrath and the punishment fall on them so another can go free.

[33 : 28] That's what we see here in the text. It's clear-eyed love. It's clear-eyed grace. It's clear-eyed mercy. And at the same time, a just and holy God is able to punish sin and rebellion and evil.

That in the suffering and death of Jesus Messiah, we see revealed the deep justice, mercy, and grace of the living God working in perfect harmony with saving power for fallen humans.

In a sense, every single one of us is Barabbas. only rather than having a crowd yell that Barabbas would be freed, Jesus willingly takes our place so that we can be free.

We're going to see this very powerfully, not next week because we're going to have a sermon on the Trinity, but the week after when we look at Jesus as death upon the cross, that the hint of the Barabbas story is seen far more clearly when Jesus says to the thief dying upon the cross, today you will be with me in paradise.

That we see Jesus dying, fulfilling the justice of God and displaying the deeper grace and mercy of God for all who put their faith and trust in him.

[34 : 49] So in conclusion, is Jesus an example? Only if we receive the gospel and only in a very, very particular way, but in a very powerful way that will actually completely and utterly change and transform our lives.

If you could put up the final slide. When we receive the gospel, we truly receive new life from God. As we are gripped by the gospel, we are nudged and drawn and shaped and grounded in a new way of living for the glory of the living God.

You see, when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, it's not just that we put our faith and trust in a story or an example, but Jesus actually did something for us.

The book of Romans describes it that Jesus is the, the death of Jesus upon the cross is the power of salvation that comes from God that's available to all who believe.

And so that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, we actually receive new life. We receive a new relationship with God. We enter into a new covenant with the true and living creator God.

[35 : 54] And that's what we receive. The Bible goes on and says other things. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are born again. We are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. That there's a range of images that portray what happens when we put our faith and trust in Jesus.

But it's also then as we are gripped by the story of the gospel, as week by week, and as day by day as we read the Bible and we come clear and clear that what Jesus does upon the cross for us, how he, knowing every single thing there is to know about you and me, knowing everything to know about me, still he died on the cross for me, that he would take my place, that he would take my doom, that he would offer me his destiny, that he does this for me.

And as this story grips us, we're nudged into saying, well, you know, maybe I should listen to him about money. when we know that at the end of the day we are reconciled to God, that God's final word about us when we appear before him, not because of our own righteousness, is to be welcomed into God's kingdom, to spend eternity in the new heaven and the new earth with the living God because of what Jesus has done for us.

When we know that that's the end of the story, maybe we say, you know, maybe I can be more generous. You know, because maybe I don't have to think that the one with the most toys at the end wins because that actually has nothing to do with the meaning and the direction of life.

And if Jesus knows me so perfectly and still he died for me, maybe I should listen. It draws me. It nudges me. And it makes me say, you know, if Jesus became poor so that I can become rich, maybe I should just make do with a little bit less money so that, you know, maybe people in China can hear the gospel or people in India can hear the gospel or that the poor in Ottawa can hear the gospel.

[37 : 49] Like, maybe that makes sense. Maybe that should shape, that will shape my life. Maybe that will ground how I view money. And the fact of the matter is that my control often, you know, often brings me into trouble.

And maybe if Jesus has loved me so deeply and done this, maybe as we're gripped by that story, it nudges us into saying that Jesus should have more control. It draws us into it.

It shapes us. It grounds us. That's why the mission statement of this church is making disciples of Jesus gripped by the gospel who live for his glory. That when we receive the gospel, we truly receive new life from God as we are gripped by the gospel.

And that means not only what, what the meaning of what Jesus does for us on the cross, but all of the nuances of the story, as we're gripped by that, we are nudged and drawn and shaped and grounded in a new way of living for the glory of the living God.

Please stand. We're going to have real time challenges. Let's just pray and then I'll tell you about the time challenges.

[39 : 05] Father, you know, even today, how many of us are worried about drawing too close to you because we fear losing control to Jesus.

Father, you know, even today, how many of us fear drawing too close to Jesus because we think he will mislead us about certain things like maybe sexuality or how we spend our time.

Father, you know how many of us are leery and worried about drawing close to Jesus because of the impact he'll have on money and how we use money.

Father, we thank you that Jesus knew everything like this about us and still he died on the cross for us. We thank you, Father, that Jesus had a clear-eyed knowledge of who we are and yet he died for us.

And we thank you, Father, that his death upon the cross was your means, your power, for us to become your children forever if we receive it.

[40 : 09] Father, we thank you for this. We ask, Father, that you would help us to receive what Jesus did for us on the cross by trusting him as our Savior and our Lord, this King of the Jews, that he would be the King of my life and the King of this congregation.

And we ask as well, Father, that you would bring the story of Jesus to us, that we would be gripped by the story of Jesus and what he did for us on the cross. And Father, as we are gripped by the gospel, make us, help us to live for your glory.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.