

# God on Trial Part 1

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 26 February 2023

Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Let's pray. Bow our heads in prayer. Father, it's snowy, it's cold. We thank you that we can be where it's warm and where it's not snowing.

We ask, Lord, that you would help us to know deeply the truth of your word, the truth of your gospel, and how we should then live, given that the gospel is truly true.

Father, bring this home to our hearts this morning. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So quite a few years ago, one of my children started to have very severe breathing problems one evening.

And she has an asthma problem. We knew that she had an asthma problem. She was quite young, very, very young. But her breathing problems, even when we gave her puffers, it didn't fix things.

Things just got worse. And so we eventually decided that I had to take her to the hospital. We didn't call the ambulance. I drove her to the hospital. And she continued to go downhill, actually.

[ 1 : 1 0 ]     And it felt afterwards I discovered that it was a bit of touch and go as to whether they were actually going to be able to save her life. But I can't remember if it was the day after a very, very hard night or two days after two hard nights.

I'd been sleeping at the hospital, sleeping in quotation marks on a chair beside my daughter's bed. But she had turned the corner. Still not better, but she turned the corner.

The things were looking good. The machines and the trend lines were going in good directions now. And I went down to the cafeteria of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario to get a muffin or something like that.

And no surprise, a cup of coffee, a very big one because I was very tired. And as I'm leaving the cafeteria, I bump into somebody who was a regular, occasional-slash-regular member of the church whom I knew.

And I had forgotten that this guy attended the church. But not only was he a doctor at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, he was actually the head of a department in the hospital.

[ 2 : 1 6 ]     So he was sort of a big mucky-muck guy. And he said, George, what are you doing here? And I just told him. And he said, oh, is she all right? And I said, oh, yeah, it looks like things are going well. And he said, are they treating you well and her well?

And I said, yeah, I have no complaints. They're doing a great job. And he said, well, I'm going to come up and see her. Now, I don't know. Afterwards, I was wondering if he was thinking of this and this and this and all these other things.

But he says he'll come up and see me. And I don't really sort of realize the significance of this until we get out of the hospital, the elevator at the floor that my daughter was on.

And there happened to be a senior doctor walking by with a group of interns, obviously. And the doctor stopped suddenly and turned and said, I'll call him Andy.

Andy, what are you doing here? And so Andy said to this doctor, whom we'll call Bob, Andy said, oh, you know, this is my really good friend.

[ 3 : 15 ] And he's also my pastor and his daughter's in your ward. And all of a sudden, Andy got a Bob, the doctor.

They got very concerned. I found out that this Dr. Bob was actually the doctor who was in charge of that whole department. That's, I guess, why she was really surprised when a doctor from another apartment came onto her floor to see one of her patients.

And so Bob got instantly concerned as to whether I was being treated right. You could just tell from the body language, like, oh, is everything going all right? Are you being treated all right? And I said, no, I'm fine. There's no problems.

And then Bob says to me, well, listen, at any time while you're here, if you have any problems, this is my name. The nurses know how to reach me. You get a hold of me. I'll make sure things are put right.

And then, of course, the head of the department from then on came and visited my daughter. Now, why am I telling you this story? What I've described is something which is just very, very deeply human.

[ 4 : 16 ] People look after their friends and sort of just their tribe, their friend. They look after each other often. And I don't know if this doctor from our congregation, Andy, he sort of wanted to guarantee that I would get treated really well by making an appearance.

Like, I don't know all that, the politics, and I never asked him. And he's no longer with us. But we got even better treatment after that.

But here's the thing. It's very, very deeply human to do something like what this doctor did. And she sees an important person in the hospital. I'm that person's friend and pastor.

And you look after each other. That's what you do. That's human. Now, I mention this because it's actually a dynamic of what's going on in the story. And it's a very important dynamic in this story.

And it's one of the reasons why this dynamic which I'm describing, which when I point it out to you, you'll see that it's there in the story. And it's one of the reasons why the Christian faith transformed the world.

[ 5 : 19 ] Like, it's very hard maybe for some of you to believe that, but the Christian faith transformed the world. Well, let's see how. If you turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter 10, sorry, Mark chapter 14.

And we're going to be reading from verse 53 on. Mark 14, 53 on. We're preaching through the book of Mark.

And that's why we come to this story. And I'm going to do, once again, the same type of technique I did last week. Imagine this is a European, some Europeans or the BBC or some British group has decided to put all of this into a bit of a series, a limited edition series.

And so there's a succession of episodes to tell the overarching story. And you might or might not remember, but last week ended on a cliffhanger. I'm watching The Last of Us.

And those of you who've been following that along, last week ended with a cliffhanger. And there's a similar cliffhanger that happens here. The story ends with all of Jesus' friends abandoning him and a group of men armed with clubs and other weapons have seized him.

[ 6 : 29 ] And they've carted him away in the night. And now the story continues. And so we'll call this first scene, scene one, the right quorum. Scene one, the right quorum.

And it's verse 53. And here's how it goes. And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. Now, you can listen to my last two sermons.

I'm not going to go into the significance of naming the chief priests, the elders and the scribes. But here we see now the high priest. We know now, in fact, later on, it's covered up in our translation.

It's the Sanhedrin. And there's one high priest and 70 other members that make up this gathering. I mean, but there's, and by the way, when it says here, they led Jesus to the high priest, it's not as if they led Jesus there.

This is where you need to, you know, the filmmaker would have to make sure that the episode shows this. They lead him there with clubs, seized. So they've seized him to make sure he can't run away.

[ 7 : 31 ] They're all armed, heavily armed. Jesus is in the midst of them. And that's how they lead him to the high priest. And when it says all, and this is going to be important throughout the story, wherever you see the word all or whole, they don't mean every single priest and every single scribe and every single elder.

And they don't even mean every single one who's on the Sanhedrin. What they're referring to is basically that a quorum has been reached. And ancient people who wrote at that time that we have their records of what they wrote, we know that in those days a quorum was the high priest and 22 other people.

And if you had the high priest and 22 other people, you had everybody there. You had all, in a sense, that's what all refers to. And that's later on what whole refers to. And when they say the decision is unanimous, that's what it's referring to.

It's a valid meaning on one level of the Sanhedrin. They can make decisions. And that fits in with why in other of the ancient biographies it says that some people remember the council and they wouldn't have voted against this.

Well, that's not a discounting of what's happening right here. The quorum has been reached. And here's the thing with my introductory story. It's a normal human thing to care for your group, so to speak.

[ 8 : 53 ] And my parishioner that I've called, Andy, he sees me there in the hospital. He knows I shouldn't be there. And he wants to make sure, I mean, he is a doctor. He loves children.

He's a doctor because he loves to see children made well. So he has both a natural human desire to go see my daughter. But at the same time, he's wanting to make sure I'm carried well.

But that can also get twisted so that we make sure the right people, our people, are in positions of power and authority. And the high priest is manufacturing and the others are manufacturing this.

And they might say beforehand, we're going to be gathering people together. We've got to get our people there. We've got to get our people there who are sound. Right? You know, don't bring in Fred or, you know, or Smith.

They're on our side. But, you know, they get wishy-washy and caught up on legalities and all of that stuff. And don't bring in, you know, Abe. And don't bring in, you know, Sam. Because, you know, I don't know, they're a bit sympathetic to it.

[ 9 : 57 ] And we want to make sure our people, the sound people, from our point of view, are there. And that's the dynamic that's going on. And they're successful. They're successful. So the right quorum is there.

So now the next bit is sort of odd. And if, once again, we were doing this as a television series, we're setting up something here that's going to be central to the very next episode.

The next episode seems to be taken aside from the storyline. And it's setting it up with this small incident. But there's also something very important for us to notice in it. So scene two is he knows better with a question mark.

He knows better. And it's verse 54. And it goes like this. And Peter had followed Jesus at a distance right into the courtyard of the high priest.

And Peter was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. Now, when we'd last seen Peter, he'd fled. Obviously, he has a bit of a change of heart. And he follows along at a distance.

[ 11 : 02 ] And now he comes right into the courtyard. Now, why do I call it he knows better? This is deeply human. Deeply, deeply human. Jesus has warned Peter that he, Peter, is going to deny Jesus three times before the cock crows, before the rooster crows.

Although there's a different way to understand that, which we'll talk about next week. And Peter has seen that every time Jesus speaks, Jesus is correct. And so Peter here thinks, I know better.

Because what does he do? He actually goes and sits with the guards. Like, you know, this is actually just saying, I know better.

Like, Peter, Jesus is going to be wrong. I'm not going to deny him. And, you know, maybe that would be hard for Peter to deny him if he'd gone and just hidden off somewhere by himself for the night. You know, trying to pray and screw up the curds and things.

But he, in a sense, tempts fate. He tests the limits. Right? And he actually goes right amongst a whole pile of guards. Some of whom are going to recognize him.

[ 12 : 09 ] And who are going to ask him if, you know, he's tempting. You know, he's like, not that any of this happened to any of our, any of us when we were young.

And our parent says to us, well, why did you go to that party? Or why did you go off with those people? Didn't you know that if you went with those people, they were going to do this and that was going to happen? Well, you did.

But you thought you could sort of go up to the line but not cross the line? It's very deeply human. That's what Peter thought he could do. You could go up to the line but not cross it. And as we'll see next week, he crosses it.

But in the meantime, something also deeply human, weirdly human, happens next. See, one of the things about this story is that everything about it could easily be filmed in a realistic series.

It's something, once again, which is weirdly human that we don't often think about. And that's the next thing. It's scene number three, the show trial.

[ 13 : 16 ] Some of you know what a show trial is. The show trial, verse 55, and it goes like this. Now, the chief priests and the whole council, that's the Sanhedrin literally, were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none.

Now, a show trial is something that comes from the Soviet era where basically everybody knew that the person was going to be found guilty.

Everybody knows that in advance. But they go through the appearance of having a legal trial. But everything about it is a sham. The person's going to probably confess, has been beaten or tortured until they confess, or threatened with the death of their loved ones until they confess.

Everybody knows, involved in the trial, that there's no justice there. It's all just appearance. But, you know, here's the thing. This is what's so deeply human about it.

We can say, oh, you know, those terrible Soviet Union or, you know, other more modern examples of it, right? Because they're not seeking a trial to figure out what happened. You know, look what it says again. They're seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death.

[ 14 : 28 ] And that's what they're seeking to do. But we all know that they just want to have Jesus killed, but they're looking for evidence, so to speak. And, you know, most people won't just come out and say, yeah, that's a lie.

I did that just because I'm selfish. And I just did it, you know, because I don't like you. I hate you. Nobody says that. Well, they say, well, you know, there's this reason and there's this circumstance and I'm pursuing justice and I'm doing this and I'm doing that.

Like, that's a deeply human thing. We rationalize our actions. In fact, it's almost as if in Genesis 3, which is whether or not you believe it's literally true, and I actually believe that it's literally true, it's deeply psychologically true that we human beings continue to love fig leaves.

That after we've done something wrong, and the people who matter know we've done something wrong, we like to have some type of fig leaf to try to cover that, the revelation that we've done something wrong.

We like to have things to make it look like we're, it was really good. And we see that in Canada. We see it in our own lives. It's something deeply human.

[ 15 : 44 ] So they are going to have a pretend process, but everything about this is wrong. If you'll notice here in the previous story, it said that Jesus, or the previous verse, that Peter had followed them into the courtyard of the high priest.

Like, this is a trial happening in the middle of the night, and it's happening not where the Sanhedrin has their meeting, nor in the high court, but in the high priest's personal residence, where guards are out front, to make sure that inconvenient, nasty people who might want to give other type of testimony definitely can't even appear.

Everything about this stinks, but they still want to make it look like there's evidence. They still want to make it look like they're just concerned with the truth.

They have valid reasons, but everything about it stinks. So how does it work out for them? Well, we already had a hint, but how does it work out for them? The next scene is scene four, the false witnesses mess up.

That's what it's called, the false witnesses mess up. Verses 56 to 59. I mean, there's another problem. We're in the middle of the night. Like, where do these witnesses show up?

[ 17 : 01 ] Like, how is it that a quorum shows up? Like, these things don't naturally happen, right? Everything about this is a conspiracy. The right people are there. It's all a show trial. It's all a stage, but they still mess up.

Verse 56. For many bore false witness against Jesus, but their testimony did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness against Jesus, saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands.

Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. Now, what's going on here is probably the high priest who's organizing this whole thing, along with a couple of his buddies.

He's going to himself, like, we got morons as false witnesses. Like, he's probably going to later on give a tongue lashing to some of his assistants and aides, because they got complete idiots and fools to come up and do the false witness.

Like, can't you even do something as simple as this correctly? And then what we see in the text is actually a very important moment for us as Christians.

[ 18 : 16 ] Notice here in verse 58 it says, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands.

And you wonder, well, where's the contradiction in that? But here's what's gone on. Mark has summarized their argument better than they could put it.

That's what he's done. They probably have bits and pieces of this, and the bits and pieces are contradictory. They're maybe internally contradictory and contradict each other, and they're not able to put it together.

They can't get their lie straight. And Mark has summarized their argument and stated it really clearly, better than they could.

Now, just as a bit of an aside, how on earth would Mark know this? Well, here's the problem. And this goes right to the heart of why it is that we're even reading a text like this 2,000 years later.

[ 19 : 23 ] They had a perfect plan. The chief priests had an absolutely perfect, brilliant plan. Who knows how many other times they had successfully got something like this off. There was just one hugely inconvenient fact.

That dang Jesus rose from the dead. Like, that massively screwed up all of their calculations.

When the tomb is empty, and Jesus appears alive, and he spends 40 days with them, teaching them. And that's separate from the fact that maybe some of these priests and others who are there later on become Christians and let people know what happens.

Now, here's the thing. If you could put up the first point, Claire, that would be good. Since Jesus is the way and the truth and the life, the way of truth is solid and clear.

And the way of the lie is vain, empty, complexity. You lie, and then people challenge you on it.

[ 20 : 47 ] You tell another couple of lies, and then later on you have to recount it. And now it's harder to remember your multiple lies than if you just actually tell the truth. I mean, that's just, that's been true time and time and time again.

And the fact of the matter is, is if you're pursuing a lie, that is something vain, both in a sense vain that you'll never accomplish it, but also vain that it's something involving your own self-flattery.

Lies are empty, and it just raises you into a whole area of complexity where you can't keep it straight. And you've just seen that with these people who want to give lying testimony. And their lying testimony are empty, and there's the complexity, and because of the complexity, they can't get their lies straight.

And this, by the way, is when I said that, you know, when you're looking at these stories and you see how they fit, how quite literally, some guys and gals at Netflix or BBC or, you know, some European broadcasting thing, they could make these things into a realistic show.

And why that is very, very important, and why it is that Christianity changed the world, is that the other religions and spiritualities of the world, truth is based in story and in myth and in feeling and in mystical experience, but not in real life.

[ 22 : 11 ] Not in real life. And the Christian claim is that this actually happened. Truth is in history. Truth is historical.

And that, as that idea launches into the Roman Empire and then eventually into all of the other, into many other cultures in the world, then you start to realize that you, like, there's something to pursuing truth.

And not just religious truth, but historical truth, and economic truth, and scientific truth, and technological truth, and moral truth. And you can see in our culture, where our culture increasingly is what you can describe validly as a post-truth society.

Why? Because in our society increasingly, what matters is truth is connected to your feeling, to your story, or to your myth, and not in what is actually real.

And as these things, in a sense, it's a return to ancient paganism, it's a return to many of the Eastern religions prior to the advent of Christianity, where people are always just as smart and always just as clever.

[ 23 : 29 ] And people never completely got lost. You can't live in the world without being concerned with true. You notice if your apples are stolen, because there's fewer than there were there.

But Christianity, the Bible, Christ, introduces into human consciousness this idea, the Bible introduces this revolutionary idea that becomes a virus that infects the human race.

Truth is solid and clear. It's historical. And you do not go just to story and myth and feeling to understand what's happening.

You seek the truth. And the truth is solid and clear. And that's why Mark is able to summarize their lies better than they are.

Because he's seeking the truth. Even the truth of what their accusation is, he seeks the truth. They seek lies and can't get it straight. Now, in a series, it's often the case, if you were doing this as a BBC thing or whatever, it's often the case that sometimes, in a subsequent episode, you revisit something from an earlier episode that just seemed to be a little bit of a small thing.

[ 24 : 49 ] And you spend the whole episode sort of trying to actually understand that small thing, because that small thing is actually very important. And that's how I'd like to approach this now. And that's the next scene, is scene five.

And we go back to verse 58. Scene five, verse 58. And it's titled, The Ironic Ignorance of Lies. The Ironic Ignorance of Lies.

Now, and look here, in verse 58 it goes, we heard him say, and here's how Mark has summarized what they were trying to get at. I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.

Now, this is one of the cases where the original, knowing the original language helps you to understand what's going on. And what's going on is that when it says temple, so first of all, Jesus didn't say this, by the way, but it's something Jesus would agree with.

And the deep irony is, it's actually a summarizing, like the basic principle is a summary of the Torah, the Tanakh, Old Testament teaching.

[ 26 : 03 ] It's a fundamental summary of Genesis to Malachi. Now, applied to the temple, but it's actually a deeply biblical teaching.

And interestingly enough, it's a teaching that secularists in Canada and atheists actually believe as well. And here's what is going on.

I will destroy this temple, and in the original language, the word temple here isn't just referring to the entire place, you know, where there's, you know, some residences and storehouses and places of prayer.

It's referring to the most holy place and the holy of holies. That's what it's referring to. The very holy place where God is supposed to dwell and meets with the high priest only once a year with sacrifices and the holy of holies.

And outside of that, only the high priest can go in after sacrifices, and it's where God dwells. So they say that Jesus said, I will destroy this holy place, this holy of holies.

[ 27 : 04 ] And here's what the claim is, that it's made with hands. And if you go back and you were to read what we call the Old Testament, what our Jewish friends called the Tanakh or the Torah, the way they describe idols are gods that are what?

Made with hands. And if you go back and read the entire Old Testament, they say that's completely ridiculous. Why is it that you make something with your own hands and then you bow down and worship it?

Like, and that's exactly what you would hear if you were to go down Rideau Street and down Bank Street and you would go to the bars and the places where people are having dim sum and they haven't gone to church and if you were to press them on it, they might eventually articulate it in some such way.

I think it's completely crazy that people go to the synagogue, the temple, the mosque, the church, or anything like that. They're just taking ideas that they've made up themselves and then they sort of try to worship it and they want to get us worship it.

And of course, that's just completely ridiculous. Like, you know, I make my, you know, we're just making your stuff up out of yourself. And so what they're saying is that the Holy of Holies is just made with hands.

[ 28 : 17 ] And then in three days, and Jesus does talk about this, I will build another and he does talk about this a little bit specifically. He will make another and he does talk about this. He's going to in fact say that the place where we meet with God is ultimately him.

And when it says not made with hands, that, once again, if you go back to the Old Testament, that's what the contrast is. Idols are just stuff made by hands.

There's wonderful texts in the Bible where the prophets mock the peoples of the world and say they go into a bush and they cut down a tree and they take half of the tree and they burn their game that they've caught and with the other half they make an idol and fall down and worship.

Like, isn't that the most ridiculous thing in the world? We believe in the God who makes, in a sense, his kingdom and the holy of holies.

It's not made with hands. It's made by God. If you could put up the second point, what humans have made to be holy is not holy.

[ 29 : 26 ] What the triune God has made to be holy is truly holy. See, here's where we now disagree with our secular friends. We say, we agree with you.

We agree with you a thousand percent. You're completely right. If it's just people making up stuff out of their own heads, it doesn't matter how bespoke it is and how solemn we talk about it or the music or the effects or whatever.

It's just stuff made up by hands. Just, you know, crap that people make and you shouldn't worship it. But what if there really is a God that does exist who has made certain things to be holy? He's done it.

Not us. We just receive it. Well, you know, in fact, if we live in a world where nothing is ever made by the triune God and there's nothing that's actually really truly holy, then we live in a meaningless universe.

And there is a part of us, and it's because we ultimately are made in the image of God, that longs to not live in a meaningless, empty universe.

[ 30 : 36 ] And so for many people, they don't understand that that sense that they make, that they have, which is very, very deep, is only made clear and understood in the gospel.

Now, from his enemy's point of view, the question is, can this be fixed? Well, here we get to scene six.

Scene six, which is entitled The Ironic Witness of the Leading Enemy. Right? So the last scene was called The Ironic Ignorance of Lies.

They actually are on to something. But here we see this next scene is called The Ironic Witness of the Leading Enemy.

Verses 60 to 61, and here's how it goes. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and in the original language, this is a dramatic moment of emphasis. He's been sitting, in a sense, like up here, running things, and now all of a sudden he leaves his place, goes right into the middle, face to face, right in the middle.

[ 31 : 44 ] And makes this thing. And the high priest stood up in the middle and asked Jesus, Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you? But Jesus remained silent and made no answer.

Again, the high priest asked him, Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Son of the Blessed means Son of God.

Blessed is a way that they have avoided using the name of God, which had already developed as a habit in those days. And just to be clear, they understood in a way that we understand on one level, except that so many people in our culture now believe lies, right?

That what is in, you know, we have at least one woman here in the congregation who's going to have a baby, and we all know that what is in that baby, what is in her womb, will not come out as a kitten or a dog.

It is human. human. Humans beget humans. They have human nature. We know that, but we don't know that because our culture increasingly believes lies.

[ 32 : 52 ] And when you believe lies, you enter into vain, empty complexity. And vain, empty complexity is where evil grows. Where evil grows.

So he's saying, are you the Messiah? Are you God, the Son of God? Are you claiming that you are God, that there is God the Father and God the Son?

Are you claiming that, the high priest says? Now just so you know, there's a, I'm going to entitle this sermon, by the way, The Trial of God, Part 1.

Then we're going to have an interlude, and then we're going to have The Trial of God, Part 2. And in a sense, The Trial of God, Part 1, is the trial of the committed and the engaged, and trial number two is the trial of the atheists.

People don't really give a hoot. People don't give a hoot. Atheists. And what we see here is that they're going to need to have two things to convict Jesus, because there's going to have to be two trials, because they're not allowed to pass a death sentence on anybody.

[ 34 : 02 ] The Romans have to do that. So from their point of view, they want a charge of blasphemy, because by their law, blasphemy is a capital offense, and they can sentence Jesus to death. But they're also looking for something that the Romans will see as being worthy of death.

And they're looking for two things, and the high priest, ironically, nails it. Are you the Messiah?

Messiah. If Jesus says yes, Rome's got him. Because as far as they're concerned, the Messiah means a king, a ruler, who will overthrow the Romans and bring in Jewish rule over all the earth.

If you say you're the Messiah, got you. And if you say you are God, the Son of God, you are guilty of blasphemy, the Romans don't give a hoot about that, but we give a hoot about it.

You're deserving of death. And here we see something which is very, very, very, very important. You know, the Bible says that the demons know perfectly about who God is and about who Jesus is, yet it doesn't cause them to love him or to want to know him, but it only deepens their hatred.

[ 35 : 16 ] We often think that if we just know what's true, we'll submit to it. We'll want to follow it. We'll want to believe it. But that's, in fact, a very shallow view of human nature.

Often, the more clearly we know, the more we hate. So will Jesus stay silent?

Let's go to the next scene. Scene 7, verse 62. Truth, death, and vindication. And we're almost done. Truth, death, and vindication. Scene number 7, verse 62.

It goes like this. And Jesus said, right, so the charge is, are you the Christ? That's the Messiah. Are you the Son of the Blessed? In other words, are you the Son of God? Are you God, the Son of God?

And Jesus said, I am. Yes. He's been silent. He's been silent to all the lies and all the confusion and all the vain complexity.

[ 36 : 18 ] Now he says, yes, I am. And you will see the Son of Man, that's a semi-divine figure, now understood to be fully divine, seated at the right hand of God in the place of honor and coming later with the clouds of heaven.

Now here's the thing. If you could put up the next point, Claire, it would be very helpful. This is very significant. On trial for his life, because that's what he is.

He's on trial for his life. The Bishop of Ottawa, just a few months before we left the Diocese of Ottawa, called me in, improperly, probably illegally, on a Saturday afternoon to fire me.

And he made a huge strategic mistake. He had a lawyer with him. I was very worried. I thought I was going to get fired and it would mess up us leaving the church and everything like that.

But when I went in and I saw the lawyer, at that point in time, they didn't know that we had a lawyer. And I said to him, I see that you have a lawyer present. And my lawyer has told me to never be in a room alone with you when you have a lawyer and I don't.

[ 37 : 41 ] Here's his card. Your lawyer can call my lawyer and set up a time for us to have this meeting. Now I ended up answering a couple of questions. I'd been trained by another lawyer about what to say.

But the point is, I avoided being fired. Jesus is on trial for his life. And here's the point. On trial for his life, Jesus testifies that he is both the Messiah and God, the Son of God.

On trial for his life, he testifies publicly to his enemies that he is both the Messiah and God, the Son of God.

If you could put up the next point as well. And here's the other thing which he is saying when he says, and you will see me at the right hand of God, the Father, and you will see me coming again with the clouds of heaven.

There is an implication here that he knows that he is going to die and he's going to rise from the dead and he's going to ascend and he's going to return. The resurrection of Jesus is a vindication of who he is, what he accomplished, and what he taught.

[ 38 : 54 ] The resurrection of Jesus is a vindication of who he is, what he accomplished, what he taught. You know, there are some, I'm not going to go into all the details, there were quite a few times within the first ten years that I was a Christian where I almost gave up the Christian faith.

And I have to tell you, it was, you know, my education at Carleton University and then going to an ultra, ultra, ultra liberal seminary. And I have to confess, you know, in heaven I'll discover that there was a little old lady, maybe Beryl, praying for me and that's why I didn't lose my faith.

That's what I'll discover. But I will say to you that one of the things that helped me, and just, I think some of you have heard this before, but for me, if I was to stop being a Christian, I would be a nihilist.

I think that's the best option. All things are permissible. There is no God. There is no meaning in life. And partly what stopped me from losing my faith was that I didn't see any middle ground beyond that, but the other thing was that Jesus just, dang it, he rose from the dead.

And even though I might not know how to solve this intellectual problem or this dilemma or this moral thing, the fact of the matter is Jesus really did rise from the dead. And if that is the case, it vindicates that he is God, the son of God.

[ 40 : 12 ] He is the Messiah. It does vindicate that he accomplished something on the cross for me to make me right with him because that's what he taught. And it vindicates him. It vindicates him.

And then almost to the end, if you could put up the final point, Claire, the only judgment that matters is the judgment made by the triune God. The only judgment that matters is the judgment made by the triune God.

See, this is the beauty of the gospel, is the beauty of the gospel is that what Jesus taught is when we, in a sense, put our faith and trust in him, that what he's accomplished for us, his taking away of our sin and gifting us his righteous life, we know what God's judgment will be about us because we are in Christ.

and we will know that Christ has dealt with everything that needed to be dealt with in your life and mine so that the justice of God could be satisfied and the mercy of God could be revealed.

And so when we put our faith and trust in Christ, we can know with absolute certainty that the only judgment that matters is made by him. And he will say, welcome my son or welcome my daughter.

[ 41 : 38 ] Just in closing, I'll just read the last few verses. Scene number eight, how to prove yourself wrong. How to prove yourself wrong.

Verses 63 to 65. And the high priest tore his garments and said, what further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?

And they all, like trained seals, said, condemned him as deserving death. And then some began to spit on him and cover his face and strike him saying, ha, ha, ha, ha, prophesy that.

You can't prophesy anything. Prophesy that. And the guards received him with blows. If you go back and you read Mark chapter 10 verse 33 and 34, Jesus said that after he was condemned, he would be spit upon and beaten with blows.

And I'm sorry, those fools mocking that he couldn't prophesy fulfilled the prophecy by what they did. They made themselves foolish.

[ 42 : 47 ] Invite you to stand. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we confess that we are human.

And Father, for those of us who are in Christ, on one hand, Father, we know that you have made us born again. When we put our faith and trust in Jesus, you made us born again.

And that Jesus is our hope of glory. And that one day we will stand before you face to face, not based on our own righteousness or our own accomplishments, but purely and utterly because of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and his finished work upon the cross and our faith and trust in him.

And even that, Father, is a moving of your Holy Spirit to help us to do that. And so, Father, we know that that is our destiny, but there is still a part of us, Father, that loves lies and doesn't love the truth.

And Father, we ask that you would make the gospel more and more real to our heart, to form us to love truth, to love true truth and truth in the spiritual world, the aesthetic world, the world of economics, the world of science, the world of justice, just the world of how it is, that you, Father, more and more would grip us with the gospel so that our desire, our heart's desire is to have eyes that see the truth and a heart that desires not just the truth, but also to see the truth within the context of love and mercy and grace, a concern for justice, true justice and true right and wrong, all, Father, with a humbling knowledge that we ourselves are sinners who need to be redeemed by grace.

[ 44 : 31 ]    Father, we ask that you would so grip us with the gospel that you would do that work of sanctification in our lives. And Father, if there are any who are hearing this message who have not yet given their life to Christ, that you would, Father, by your Holy Spirit, help them to cross that important line where they call out to you that you, Father, would be their Father in heaven as they put their faith and trust in Jesus.

And we ask all these things in the name of Jesus, your Son, and our Savior, and all God's people said, Amen. Amen.