

John: The Word Became Flesh - John 19:17-42

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning church.

We have two Sundays left here in Uden, so let's savor it. Enjoy it. Go ahead and turn open to John chapter 19.

We have three weeks left in our exposition through the Gospel of John. I will be looking at verse 19 this morning, chapter 20 next week, and then chapter 21 the following week.

So we're condensing things down, so in that spirit we probably won't cover everything in each chapter. And actually this morning, even though we're looking at about verse 17 to the end, I'm just going to end us at verse 30 and give you some homework to finish reading the narrative at home.

So we will go looking at verses 19 verses 17 through 30 this morning.

[1 : 12] Let me pray. The last God's blessing on our study, and then just dive in. Father, it is good to be here this morning. Lord, we're thankful for the gift of first and foremost our salvation.

Lord that we can be forgiven, that we could be your friends, we could be your sons and your daughters. And Lord, we thank you for those that we get to walk with in this life that love you as well and Lord the gift of your church.

And so we say thank you for allowing us to be part of this local expression of your church this morning. Holy Spirit, would you minister to us and be at work amongst us?

Would you illumine your word and Lord would you pierce hearts and Father bring conviction and comfort and Lord we want to just hear from you.

So if there are things that we need to receive, pray that you would be at work in each of us and Lord that we would look something more like you because of our time spent together.

[2 : 15] It's in your name we pray Jesus and all guys people said. Amen. Well, the scene this morning is a difficult scene.

It's really an excruciating scene. We're going to be looking at the crucifixion of Jesus this morning here in chapter 19.

The thing that I want us to walk away with and kind of the big idea this morning is there's really nothing random about this event. There's nothing accidental about it.

What occurred to Jesus is not happenstance. It's not coincidence, but rather providence. This is God's sovereign plan.

And in fact, Peter proclaimed that in the book of Acts in Acts 2.23 when he said this Jesus his first sermon delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God speaking to the Jews, he said you crucified.

[3 : 23] You're culpable, but this was God's sovereign plan. God's most gracious gift to planet earth to those living in rebellion to their maker.

The crucifixion of Jesus is not an afterthought. And John's account of it is saturated with the sovereignty of God.

That is the emphasis that he places upon his retelling of this particular event.

And so as we come to the scene this morning, as we have already read and considered Jesus has really gone through the longest evening imaginable.

There have been six separate interrogations. First to Annas, the former high priest, then to Caiaphas, the current ruling high priest, then he is before the Sanhedrin, then he stands before Pilate, the governor for Rome, there in the Holy Land, and then Herod, the tetrarch who is down in Jerusalem.

[4 : 30] He rules in the Galilee region, but then Jesus stands before him, and then finally again before Pilate. He has been squirmed, he's been beaten, he's been ridiculed.

Matthew 26 said that he was spat upon, he was struck in the face, and he has now been found guilty of sedition at a sham trial by Pilate the coward.

That folds to the Jewish pressure for him to come to a guilty verdict, because the Jewish leaders do not like the Messiah that God has sent.

Jesus has now been delivered over to the Roman soldiers, and this is where we pick up our narrative this morning, and we'll just read it in a couple parts. First here, beginning in verse 16b to verse 22.

One records it says, so they, the Roman soldiers, took Jesus, and he went out, burying his own cross to the place called the place of the skull, which in Aramaic is called Galgotha.

[5 : 43] There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross, it read, Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.

Many of the Jews read the inscription for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic in Latin and in Greek.

So the chief priest of the Jews said to Pilate, do not write the king of the Jews, but rather, this man said, I am the king of the Jews.

Pilate answered, what I have written, I have written. So Jesus at this point is bloodied, he's a mess, it could be that he was at this point unrecognizable.

There is a prophecy in Isaiah, Isaiah 50 verse 6 that talks about he is being spat upon and actually his beard being pulled out.

[6 : 47] His body would have been lacerated from the scourging in the early hours of the morning. But trying to pacify the Jewish religious leaders to no avail.

So Jesus at this point has had a ton of blood loss, his bones and perhaps internal organs may even have been exposed by the brutality of the scourging process that he endured.

It's late morning, somewhere between 9 a.m. and noon, and Jesus now makes his walk from the Praetorium, the judgment seat of Pilate to the crucifixion site, and it says here in verse 17, he did this all the while bearing his own cross.

So part of the Roman punishment was that a criminal had to carry the cross beam of the cross to the site of the execution. The beam would have been placed on the back of Jesus, his arms draping over, and the Romans did this in order to make a public spectacle of the criminal.

It was a deterrent. And Jesus, so weak from the scourging and the beating that had occurred all through the hours preceding this, he needed help carrying this load.

[8 : 12] And it actually describes in Luke 23 in that Gospel that Simon of Cyrene of North Africa, he's pulled from the crowd to help Jesus at some point carry this cross beam to Calvary.

What's interesting is today actually Muslims believe that Simon is the one that took the place of Jesus on the cross.

And that works with Islam in that there's no concept of vicarious atonement, substitutionary atonement, that Jesus didn't die in the place of anyone.

In fact, he didn't die in Muslim theology. They actually teach that Jesus simply ascended, this prophet ascended to heaven, no death eliminating that doctrine.

And yet the Bible has been pointing out that there is a Savior that's going to come that's going to take the place of sinful man.

[9 : 15] And we see this even from the pages of Genesis, the whole sacrificial system pointing towards the perfect sacrifice to come.

Even this scene that is before us this morning of Jesus carrying the cross beam, this wooden cross beam, it's foreshadowed in the pages of Genesis because we have this scene of Abraham being asked to sacrifice his son Isaac.

And walking to his potential death on Mount Moriah and in Genesis 22 verse 6 it says, And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son.

This was a preview of Jesus's death some 2000 years then later. Only God was willing to do what he ultimately did not ask Abraham to do.

He gave up his son. Well the site of the execution is described here in John as Galgotha that would be in the Aramaic or the Greek Calvary in the Latin and it just simply translates the skull's place or the place of the skull.

[10:36] It's perhaps named after the appearance of the rock formation there in that rock quarry just on the north side of the city beyond the northern gate, the northern wall.

And the Gospels indicate that Jesus goes out of the city, out of his current location. And what's interesting about this is that Jesus, he was crucified outside the city.

In Leviticus 16 it talks about the day of atonement and how to celebrate that. And in verse 22 it talks about the place where the body of the animal was to be burned on the day of atonement.

The blood brought into the holy place but the body was taken outside the city, the place of uncleanness. And that's what Jesus became, he became unclean for us.

But you see the parallel there? Everything points to this is God's sovereign plan. The writer of Hebrews wrote it this way in Hebrews 13:11, says, for the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.

[11:54] And Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his blood. I should give you chills.

Jesus took our uncleanness outside the city, the final sin offering. Just there's nothing accidental about the events of the crucifixion.

And once Jesus arrives at this site, it says here in verse 18, there they crucified him.

And it's easy to just, those four words, there they crucified him. We talk about the cross. But those words don't really unpack the awfulness of what occurred 2,000 years ago.

In fact, crucifixion was the most shameful way to die. The Persians, they invented it, the Romans, they perfected it. It was such an awful way to die that if you were a Roman citizen, you could not be crucified unless on orders from the emperor.

[13:06] Cicero, Roman order philosopher of the first century, he wrote that crucifixion was the most pitiable of deaths. And the very word cross should be removed from one vocabulary because it is beneath the cultured man to even speak.

The first century historian Josephus wrote of crucifixion that it was the most wretched of death. It was a death reserved for the lower class, for slaves, for foreigners, for criminals.

And the mechanics of this type of execution, the person is stripped naked, there's no tasteful loincloth, as you often see in paintings and renditions of this scene.

A nine foot vertical beam is already in place at the site. The victim is laid on their back, arm stretched out, nails pounded into the fleshy portions of their wrists, and then they're hoisted up onto the post, and the cross beam is attached.

The feet are either nailed or they're tied to the post, and if it's nailed, the feet are turned sideways, nail driven through the heels.

[14:30] There's a piece of wood or a peg added to rest the buttocks upon, and this was not for relief, but it was to increase the agony. It was actually placed there to prolong life in order to draw out the death.

The victim could hang there for hours, even days, in sweltering heat, and what we know from the record in the Gospels, and both Mark 15 and Matthew 27, that between noon and three, the six hour and the ninth hour, darkness was there, that the crucifixion, it occurred beginning at the six hour at noon.

This was the heat of the day. And so death for the individual would come through heart failure, it would come through shock, dehydration, or worst of all, through asphyxiation, suffocation.

The victim would spend every breath pushing themselves up with their legs and the peg that they had behind them, their arms, just to expand their chest cavity in order to breathe, producing painful muscle spasms.

And if the victim did not do this, they would suffocate. And what is arresting for us, church, is that God sovereignly chose this moment in history to substitute his life for the sins of the world.

[16:08] The time when crucifixion was the mode of execution. Very painful, very humiliating, very public.

Can you imagine if someone you loved and you were there and you had to endure the scene helplessly watching, it would devastate us. It would devastate us.

And yet the truth of the matter is someone has, someone that absolutely unconditionally loves us has done this for us.

God turns an instrument of torture into a throne of glory. And he did it for us. The most egregious evil mankind will ever undertake where life is birthed.

Well our narrative, it also says here in verse 19, Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.

[17 : 22] It would have been typical for the criminal to have his crime written on a tablet that either a soldier would carry before them as they walked to the site of the execution.

And this tablet would describe the crime that they were dying for or it was hung around their neck while they walked through the city streets.

And it says here, Pilate, he wrote something, he attaches this to the cross on arrival and it's written in three languages, Aramaic, Greek and Latin.

The three common languages of the day. I believe this is a declaration to the world who's hanging on the cross and the Jews have a problem with it.

They want it altered. They want some edits made. They want it to read a false assertions made that this man claimed to be the king of the Jews.

[18 : 25] And yet I think Pilate's conscience has gotten the better of him. He says in Luke 23 that the charges related to Jesus are baseless.

In the other gospels we have scenes of his wife telling him, hey, this Jesus is innocent, warning her husband, don't have anything to do with his execution, walk away.

So something's occurring in Pilate and the Jews come, we don't know if this is his revenge towards them, feeling as though he's stuck and has to carry this thing out. But he says, you know what?

What I've written, it stands. It is what it is. And I'm not going to change it. You know in my studies this week I contemplated Pilate.

He's an interesting character, a confusing individual. There's a sense that he knows, he sort of knows. It would not surprise me.

[19 : 23] I hope this is not heretical, but it would not surprise me if we were to meet him in glory someday. It's hard to know.

Was there something occurring in him? Was this the beginning just glimpses of him coming to a place of trust in Jesus as his personal savior?

We don't know. That's Jay. We don't know. But it would not surprise me. It's interesting at the end of the second century, Tertullian, the North African writer, he claimed that when Pilate arrived in Rome he told Tiberius, he's at the time about the miracles that accompany the death of Jesus.

And he did this because, quote, he was already a Christian in his conscience. Hard to know.

Well, let's continue. Let's look at verse 23 to 30 here. It says when the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments and divided them into four parts.

[20 : 33] He gleaned from that that there were four soldiers overseeing each crucifixion. So they were divided into four parts. One part for each soldier.

Also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless. Woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said to one another, let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who it should be that shall be.

This was to fulfill the Scriptures which says they divided my garments among them. And for my clothing they cast lots. So the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciples whom he loved, John, standing nearby, he said to his mother, woman, behold your son. And he said to the disciple, behold your mother.

And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

[21 : 44] After this Jesus knowing that all was now finished said to fulfill Scripture, I thirst. A jar full of sour wine stood there.

So they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine he said, it is finished.

And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Let me just mention something briefly here before we get into this section. We have an interesting sort of juxtaposition.

We have these four soldiers and then we have these four faithful women. I don't know if there is something going on there in terms of contrasting these selfish, self-absorbed individuals with these selfless individuals who had been touched by the life of Jesus.

But it is interesting because there are four women described. Of course we see Mary Magdalene, the healed of seven demons that talks about in Luke 8 verse 2. She certainly loves Jesus and just excruciating night for her, but we are introduced to, it says here, his mother and his mother's sister.

[22 : 57] And what is fascinating here is in Matthew, in that account in Matthew 27,56, there is a different woman described, not Mary's sister, but it says in fact the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

And so there are many commentators, theologians that believe that that is describing the same individual. That in fact Mary's sister is the mother of James and John.

And that would maybe put some context and make sense when Jesus turns to John, perhaps his cousin, saying you're Aunt, she's now your mother.

Take care of her, family responsibility. Well, the section that we just looked at, it declares unequivocally that this event, the crucifixion, it's not an accident.

There's nothing accidental happening. There's nothing just coincidental. This is God's sovereign plan. This strategic plan carried out to perfection.

[24 : 11] There's over 300 prophecies that are fulfilled in the person of Jesus. And we have a few of them here, present within this passage. These prophecies in this book, they should not be here church.

If this was simply, this book was simply a book like every other book. But it's not. And you should have, when you read this, I hope that we're not so familiar with it that we're not a little freaked out sometimes when we open God's Word.

And we read things and we're like, wait a second, that was predicted and that came about how in the world could that be? There's no book like this on planet Earth. It stands alone.

And you have, let me just point out four of these prophecies that we see in this section. We first see here the soldiers in verse 24 where they say, let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who it shall be.

So it was a common Roman kind of thing for Roman guards to demand right of clothing for those that they were responsible to crucify. And they're casting lots for the tunic. This is a sought after item apparently.

[25 : 23] It's not like someone's underwear, but it is this gown that was worn under a tunic. It's like a suit underneath, you know, a trench coat. It's the thing that you want if you're going to get something from the victim here.

And so they're casting lots. And yet then we read, we go back to the Old Testament in Psalm 22:18 and we read, they divide my garments among them and for my clothing, they cast lots.

The soldiers are thinking, hey guys, let's fulfill prophecy. They're just, they're operating self-interest, opportunistic and they end up as pawns in God's redemptive plan.

They got what they wanted. But God got what He ordained. And the words of the Psalmist, they're written a thousand years prior to this event.

You start getting old, you forget things. And Julie and myself were out at the hardware store and we were leaving and I had placed my wallet and my phone on the tailgate of our vehicle.

[26 : 43] And we pulled out and left. And it didn't take me long to go, where's my phone? Where's my wallet? And they were nowhere to be seen. So she calls up her phone and we kind of see that it's somewhere in the vicinity of where we're at.

And the search begins. And yeah, if any of you saw me, you're like, hey, what's Pastor Jay out there doing in the Walmart parking lot, looking around?

Yeah. And we're searching everywhere and Julie then sees a police vehicle parked and the parking line goes up and starts to describe it to the officer.

You know, my husband, not very bright, sir. You know, lost and we're looking and it says his phone's here.

And she goes on to tell the story and he's listening and then he's asking questions, right? Kind of getting more of the narrative. And then he says at the end after she gets done explaining all this, he says, well, that's an interesting story, Julie.

[27 : 48] And then he says, it kind of freaks you out that I know your name, doesn't it? And Julie's speaking to a police officer.

So she said, yes. Turns out he had found my phone and fallen red and knew who she was and handed it over to her.

But I share that because it's like that should be the sense of like there's information here that we shouldn't have.

There's information in the Old Testament we should not have. We should not go back and read the caslots, friends.

We shouldn't have that, right? How does this book predict things that have not yet occurred when they were written? That's the thing. It should freak us out a little bit.

[28 : 45] This book is not a normal book. This is God telling us His story. And as we come to it and we recognize my goodness, this is God's plan from the beginning.

Look at verse 28. It says, she says, I thirst. A jar of sour wine stood there and so he put a sponge. He put a sponge full of sour wine on a Hissa branch and held it to his mouth.

That was recorded in Psalm 69. Verse 21, for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink. It was predicted a thousand years before this event.

Keep wine soldiers would drink and then they present unwittingly participating in God's sovereign plan.

They have no idea. And this was not a drug to ease the pain. Jesus refused this earlier in Mark 15. 23, they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.

[29 : 58] He didn't self-medicate on this day. He drank the cup of suffering, church, without medicating himself. The worst suffering actually is not even what I've described this morning.

It's the fact that he took on the sins of the world. It's the fact that he experienced the full wrath of the Father now as judge.

But the physical stuff helps us begin to understand there's so much more suffering going on than meets the eye. In the section that we're not going to get to this morning, and beyond verse 30, here's another instance of God predicting it was the day of preparation.

Preparation for Sabbath. And not just any Sabbath, but this was the Sabbath of Passover week. The religious leaders in their hypocrisy are concerned.

We don't want to defile the land due to a body hanging on a tree through the night. So the Jewish leaders ask another favor of Pilate, hey, can you speed up the death process so that we can bury this man?

[31 : 11] In order to get Jesus buried before the Passover Sabbath, the solution the leaders offered to Pilate, hey, break his legs, please.

Break his legs so he can't use his legs to push up to get more air. We want him to suffocate faster. And for whatever reason, Pilate agrees.

And it says in our chapter beginning of verse 32 that the soldiers work from the outside and do this to both criminals on the left and the right of Jesus. They break their legs and they come to Jesus and they hesitate.

And it says in verse 33, says he was already dead. They did not break his legs. Is that significant church?

Yes, yes, it's significant. Two reasons. First, prophecies fulfilled. Psalm 34, verse 20, again, a thousand years before this occurs, says he keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken.

[32 : 17] It's predicted. This is how it's going to happen. This is how the story is going to go, church. Man, if only when you read the book of Revelation and the fact that things are going to end and Jesus is going to be on his throne and he's going to rule and it's going to happen.

It's true. It's true. So, prophecies fulfilled here. But it's also significant because recall, what does John the baptizer announced in John 1?

He says, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And Jesus was that the final Passover lamb and that lamb had to be perfect.

The lamb could not have broken legs. Exodus 12, 46, you shall not break any of its bones. And Jesus is, we're not. He fulfilled prophecy in that way.

God totally in control on this day despite the horror of it all. And then we have a final bit of prophecy.

[33 : 24] Maybe it's my favorite because of what we now possess in our hands today. But in the previous section of verse 18, it says they crucified him and with him two others.

And where do we find that church in Scripture? It comes from the book of Isaiah. Isaiah 53 verse 12 where it says he was numbered with the transgressors.

So you have this prophecy. 700 years, Isaiah, before Jesus. And we now have in our possession, right? Because of the Dead Sea Scrolls found in 1948, we have this complete copy of the book of Isaiah, 17 sheets of parchment, like 24 feet long when it's all put together.

And we have this, it's in the shrine of the book Museum in Israel. And it's dated between 100 and 125 BC.

So we have in our hand a book predicting this event, this scene. And we have a copy of it 150 years prior to the crucifixion church.

[34 : 41] These prophecies, they tell us the cross was no accident. Church Christianity is intellectually reasonable.

To put your trust in Jesus, it's not a leap into fantasy. The crucifixion is fact.

I drove a gentleman in my real profession as a driver of Uber.

And I drove a gentleman yesterday. And as we're going, he said, what else do you do? I mean, that's kind of, it doesn't get any softer than that.

That's like the slowest pitch you could possibly make to me. I said, well, I actually happened to be a pastor at a church in town, Fourth Memorial, just in the Logan neighborhood. He's like, wow, you know, I'm not religious.

[35 : 36] I said, that's a funny word, isn't it? I don't think I am either. And it really caught him. But he said this, you know, my dad's in the hospital, he's got stage 4 cancer and he's dying.

And I said, I'm kind of thinking about stuff. I said, well, I'm not religious, but I believe that Jesus died for sinners.

I believe the Gospel. I believe the Bible is God's Word. And I'm in because I believe it's true. It's true.

And we had a nice conversation. I gave him my card. I gave him a book on apologetics. He answered some different questions that he may have. But I just kept coming back to, it's not about being religious.

We have to deal with this because it's true. It's true. We have an event in history predicted over and over and over again. And the events happened just as they were predicted.

[36 : 34] The crucifixion is fact. Well a darkness has been over the land for the last three hours. It's now the ninth hour.

From the sixth hour to the ninth hour, three in the afternoon, verse 30 says when Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, it is finished.

And bowed his head and gave up his spirit. It is finished. And in fact, the synoptics, they describe it as Jesus yelling it.

He cries it out. It is finished. You know, three men were crucified on this day in history.

What is it that makes Jesus' death different? Significant. Because crucifixion was common.

[37 : 34] There's been a lot of people crucified in the history of man. The Persian ruler Darius crucified 3,000 Babylonians. Alexander the Great seized the fortified city of Tyre and was so angry, crucified 2,000 men on that day.

Rome came into power in 63 BC, used crucifixion extensively. Some writers even say that there was as many as 30,000 people crucified around that time.

So what's different about the crucifixion of Jesus? Well, it has to do with the person hanging on the cross. The Jesus was God, the Son of God, and he accomplished something profound on this day. And Paul describes it for us. We know in 2 Corinthians 5, he says, For our sake he made him to be sin. Who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

An exchange was made. That thief, that thief, nothing. Nothing that happened on that day bears down upon our lives. But Jesus, he was making an exchange on this day.

[38 : 46] Willing to take upon our sin so that we might receive his righteousness. An exchange made that never should have been offered based upon our rebellion.

Lewis describes it as half-hearted creatures and yet God pursuing on this day. I love the fact that the word Calvary in the Latin, what's interesting about that word, it's actually in the feminine form. The skull's place. And in the very real sense, this was the place the church, the bride of Christ, should have laid her head.

And yet, it was our groom that places head there instead of church. Why? So that sinners could stand before God, not as enemies, but as friends.

And so when Jesus yells, It is finished. They tell us, die, the work is complete for us to enter into friendship with holy God.

[39 : 56] And He did the work. He did all the work. We can't earn it. The best thing about this church in life, we didn't earn.

Your greatest accomplishment in life, you didn't earn. You don't deserve. And we know it's not something earned because we have testimony even on this day in Luke 23 about this thief in verse

42.

It says, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And He said to Him, truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. How many people did that individual disciple in his life? None. And Jesus says, your faith is enough. Your trust is enough.

Regardless of the life that you've lived, the cross holds power for you. Church, it's not about intellectual ascent.

[41 : 00] It's not enough for us to in this room go, we believe the facts of the crucifixion. No, it's about trust.

It's about crying out to Jesus saying, I need your forgiveness. I need the cross to be accounted upon my life. I need that. It's throwing ourselves on the mercy of Jesus.

Just like that thief does on this day. Remember me, Jesus. Acts 16.31 says, this way, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

And love in the narrative, the portion you're going to read on your own tonight. It actually concludes, we meet two gentlemen who come to faith, perhaps after wandering, bit ashamed of Jesus.

The two men we meet are Nicodemus. We met earlier in the Gospel and he initially came to Jesus under the cloak of night. And then there's Joseph of Arimathea. He's described actually in the section as a secret follower of Jesus.

[42 : 09] But they came to trust in Jesus to the point where they had courage. You get to see transformation in their life where they're like, we're going to go to Pilate and we're going to ask him for the body so that we can bury him.

They put their lives in jeopardy, being willing to associate with Jesus. Both of those guys were members of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court that demanded Jesus be crucified.

And now they're saying, we're aligned with him. And it's beautiful when you see that, like, man, but, James, you don't know the life that I've lived since I professed faith in Christ.

And I would just end with commending us to the biography that many of us just finished this summer. Amazing grace. John Newton wrecks us in terms of trying to have everything fit in a neat category because John Newton came to faith in Christ.

And then he became the captain of a slave vessel. It doesn't make sense. It's way out of order.

[43 : 15] And yet by the end of John Newton's life, his final words is recorded. He says, my memory is nearly gone.

He said to a friend before he died, but I remember two things. But I am a great sinner and that Jesus is a great Savior. And the church, I would commend us this morning.

Yes, let the cross be what has saved you, but let it be that which sanctifies you as well. If there's a man who could be this kind to you, let that sanctify you, church.

We should be the kindest people on planet earth because grace has touched us in a very real way. Father, we thank you for this record.

We're thankful because John reminds us that this was not an accident. The God you were totally in control on this day. This was your plan since the beginning.

[44 : 19] You gave us snapshots of it throughout the Old Testament. You gave us prophetic words about it throughout the pages of the Old Testament.

And then we see it come to fruition in Lord. This is your very best. This is the only pathway for sinners to be forgiven, to be called saints.

And Lord, I pray that we would be people that drink often of the gospel, that we would savor the fact that you would love us so radically, that your kindness would be so absurd upon us Lord that we couldn't help but change and look something more like you, Jesus.

Our sins are forgiven. We're not trying to earn our salvation. We're just now living a life of worship saying thank you. And Father, I pray that the people in our lives, those closest to us, those that we live with, those that we work with, those that we do life around, Lord they would see something in us.

They would experience something of your kindness because we believe the gospel to be so.

[45 : 44] Lord, we can have joy today because the gospel is true and we are forgiven. And for that, Jesus, we want to live our days for your glory.

It's in your name we pray. Amen.