

The Innocent King Dies!

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[0 : 0 0] Well, I don't know what you've got planned or what you're doing today, apart from being here, of course. But people respond differently to Good Friday.

For some, it's footy day. For some, it's a chance to get away on a holiday. For Catholics, it's a day to eat fish. For Protestant, it's a day for hot cross buns.

We'll be having some after the service. In fact, we've even got some with sultanas and some with yummy choc chips. Although, have you noticed how sultanas and choc chips look the same? And so you think you're getting one, only you bite into another. It's very disappointing. So make sure you get the right ones after the service. But the point is, people respond differently today, just as they did that very first Good Friday.

And we see this in Luke's account, which is what we've been looking at here on Sunday mornings at Holy Trinity. But Luke's account is rather long, and yet it's also rather important.

[0 : 5 9] And so what we're going to do today is we're going to break it up and intersperse it with the talk. And as we do, we'll see some things declared about Jesus, but also we'll see some responses, different responses to Jesus.

And the implicit question for us is, how will we respond today? And so you can follow along on your handouts. It's a reading from Luke chapter 23.

And we'll start off with our first part. So, Ben, thank you. I'll be reading from verse 66.

At daybreak, the council of elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them.

If you are the Messiah, he said, tell us. Jesus answered If I tell you, you will not believe me And if I asked you, you would not answer But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God They all asked Are you then the Son of God?

[2 : 2 5] He replied You say that I am Then they said, why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips Well last night, Jesus was arrested by the religious leaders And handed over to the guards who spent most of the night beating him And now, the very first two words of that reading It's morning at daybreak And he's brought before them again And in verse 67, he's asked if he is the Messiah or Christ Both are titles like doctor or professor And both mean anointed one or king This is his identity, the king But also notice in verse 67 Jesus says, even if he told them They would not believe him You see, they're not interested in the truth, are they?

It's kind of like that old movie, A Few Good Men with Jack Nicholson You know that one? And he says, you can't handle the truth That's a terrible American accent But you get the point This is them They can't handle the truth And to prove it, Jesus gives them more truth In verse 69, he refers to himself as the Son of Man Who will sit at God's right hand And to be someone's right hand man Is to be their go-to guy The one who has all their authority And in the Old Testament The Son of Man is the one God gave all his authority to To be the loving king over all people And so Jesus declares He's not just the king of the Jews But he is the king of all Whose rule is about love And is seen in the lives of his people now And one day, on the last day Will be seen by all people But as God's right hand man

It also means he has a special relationship with God Which these leaders seem to pick up on a bit Because in verse 70 They ask if he is the Son of God All the kings in Judah were known as sons of God But they're asking if he is the Son of God God's actual Son But Jesus' reply neither admits it Nor denies it Probably because he knows They're not interested in the truth of it Which verse 71 confirms Instead of considering the evidence Like all the miracles that they themselves have seen And perhaps considering Perhaps he is more than just a man He may just be the actual Son of God They say, ha ha, we've got him Jesus' lack of denial was enough for them to charge him You see

For to claim your God's Son was blasphemy Even though the evidence proved it
So here's Jesus' identity The Son of God And loving King of all people And here's our first response
A refusal to believe him Despite the evidence I remember visiting someone in a nursing home And
they'd never met me before I was going there on behalf of a church person To give them
communion But when I walked in She did not believe I was a minister She said, you look too young
to be a minister Clearly this was a long time ago But you see, I did not fit her expectations And no
matter how much evidence I showed her Like I got out my business card I showed her my Bible I
was even wearing my clerical dog collar Look at this She still refused to believe Despite the
evidence We have lots of historical evidence for Jesus Even for his miracles Even for his
resurrection Yes, his resurrection And yet people today Are still like those religious leaders of
Jesus' day They refuse to believe

Oh, they might say he existed But only as a guy who taught good morals Or did good deeds Not the
Son of God And King of all people Whose loving rule is for our good in this life And whose rule will
actually judge all people in the next And I wonder if this is a response you've seen in others today
Or perhaps glimpsed in yourselves You know, you're happy to follow Jesus' teaching about good
morals But not when it comes to him shaping your life And the things you do and your priorities
Because deep down You don't really, despite the evidence Believe he's the king of your whole life
Whose rule ought to be followed Above all people Even our society But the evidence says he is It
also says he's the innocent servant So we're up to reading two

[7 : 29] And point two Thanks Reading from 23.1 Then the whole assembly rose And led him off to
Pilate And they began to accuse him Saying We have found this man subverting our nation He
opposes payment of taxes to Caesar And claims to be Messiah, a king So Pilate asked Jesus Are
you the king of the Jews?

You have said so Jesus replied Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd I find no
basis for a charge against this man But they insisted He stirs up the people all over Judea by his
teaching He started in Galilee And has come all the way here On hearing this Pilate asked if the
man was a Galilean When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction He sent him to
Herod Who was also in Jerusalem at that time When Herod saw Jesus He was greatly pleased
Because for a long time He had been wanting to see him From what he had heard about him He
hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort He plied him with many questions But Jesus gave
him no answer The chief priests and the teachers of the law Were standing there vehemently
accusing him Then Herod and his soldiers Ridiculed and mocked him Dressing him in an elegant
robe

They sent him back to Pilate That day Herod and Pilate became friends Before this they had been
enemies Pilate called together the chief priests The rulers and the people And said to them You
brought me this man As one who was inciting the people to rebellion I have examined him in your
presence And have found no basis for your charges against him Neither has Herod For he sent him
back to us As you can see He has done nothing to deserve death Therefore I will punish him And
then release him But the whole crowd shouted Away with this man Release Barabbas to us
Barabbas had been thrown into prison For an insurrection in the city And for murder Wanting to
release Jesus Pilate appealed to them again But they kept shouting Crucify him Crucify him For the
third time He spoke to them Why?

What crime has this man committed? I have found in him No grounds for the death penalty
Therefore I will have him punished And then release him But with loud shouts They insistently
demanded That he be crucified And their shouts prevailed So Pilate decided to grant their demand
He released the man Who had been thrown into prison For insurrection and murder The one they
asked for And surrendered Jesus To their will Now before we get to Jesus' innocence Did you
notice Another pair of responses?

This time by the secular leaders Herod and Pilate And so in verse 8 Herod longed to see Jesus And
basically wants Jesus To perform for him Like a circus monkey Did you notice?

[10 : 53] You know Do a sign or a miracle for me Answer a question Do a cartwheel Or whatever it
was But when Jesus stays silent Herod throws a tantrum And mocks Jesus While Pilate later caves
To peer pressure And gives up Jesus Surrendered him It says And again we see these responses
Of mocking and caving Today Don't we?

Well Peter Perhaps You know You've actually felt The mocking yourself And it seems like Jesus
and Christianity Is being mocked More and more And as I said Perhaps you've copped it From

friends or family Or colleagues If they find out You've been here today Or some start off Calling themselves Christians But then cave to Peer pressure From their work colleagues Friends or family And so they give up Following Jesus Perhaps you've also Felt that pressure too But did you notice How often Jesus Was declared innocent In that second reading?

Verse 4 Pilate begins By saying that He has no basis For a charge Against him And then when Jesus comes back From Herod Pilate says Another three times I've found no basis For your charges He appealed to them again And then for a third time He says Why?

I've found in him No grounds For death Plus We heard that Herod implies it Because he sent Jesus back to Pilate Again declaring Jesus' innocence And later on In our passage One of the criminals Defends it He says This man Jesus Has done nothing wrong He's innocent And in the final verse The centurion Declares it Surely this was A righteous Or innocent Man You see Luke Includes all this Dialogue To highlight Jesus' innocence For us Why?

Or so that we might See Jesus is not Just the loving King of all But the Innocent servant Who will suffer For our sins You see God Promised to send A servant Who would bear Our sins We heard that From our first Reading in Isaiah Chapter 53 My righteous Or innocent Servant Will bear Their iniquities Their sins And we know Luke is wanting Us to make This connection Between Jesus Here And Isaiah The servant Back there Because the Chapter before Jesus made That connection Himself In chapter 22 Jesus said It is written Isaiah 53 And he was numbered With the transgressors And I tell you That this must be Fulfilled in me Well here it is Being fulfilled First When he suffered Affliction And was humiliated By the Herod And the soldiers And even nailed [13:56] To the cross Later He did not Open his mouth He was silent We were told Second Though he was Charged with it He actually committed No violence Third He will pour out His life Unto death On the cross Fourth He will be numbered With the transgressors Or sinners And he was Right in the middle Of them And fifth He does make Intercession Or pray for transgressors He later prays Father forgive them For that act Of crucifying him You see Luke Wants us to know That Jesus Is that Righteous Or innocent Servant God promised Who would Bear our Iniquities Bear our Sins For at the cross Jesus didn't Just die But more than that He took our Punishment For our sin In our place It's as though God made him

Who had no sin Become sin For us Put it all On him Why Or so that We can go Free to live And that's Exactly what's Illustrated with A real life Illustration of Barabbas Did you notice In verse 13 Jesus is accused Of inciting Rebellion Or literally Insurrection But is innocent Says Pilate He committed No violence While in verse 19 We're told Barabbas was Guilty of Exactly that Thing Of insurrection Rebellion And violence Murder That's pretty Violent And yet Verse 25 What happens In verse 25 Well it's the Kids talk They swap Places Barabbas the Guilty One goes Free to live While Jesus The innocent One Is condemned To die As I said Here is that Memory verse From the Kids talk Christ the King Died for Sin Once for All people He the Righteous One For us The unrighteous One So that We can be Brought to God We can go Free to Live with God Almost a Year ago To the Day There was Some Stabbings In Sydney At the Bondi Junction Westfield I don't Know if You remember This One of Those who Died Was 38 Year old Ashley Good You see She had Her baby Girl With her Whom the Attacker Tried to Kill As well But Ashley Died To protect Her baby So that Her baby Could go Free And live No doubt Because she Loved her Child Well God Loves us Deeply As does His son Jesus And so Jesus Willingly Went to The cross To protect Us Not from A knife That the Baby Did not Deserve But from Eternal Punishment That we Do Deserve Because we

Are all Sinners Even the Kids knew It themselves Didn't They I'm sure we May not be Guilty of Insurrection And murder At least I Hope not But we Are all Guilty of Mistreating God From time To time We often Forget God Or ignore God Or even Disobey God And when We stand Before Jesus The King To give An Account Of Our Lives For There To be Justice Then God Must Punish Us He Has To If There Is To be Justice For Sin And yet In Love Deep Love For Us Jesus The Innocent One Died For Us The Guilty Ones So That We Can Go Free To Live Live With God Now Under Jesus Loving Rule!

Paradise As We'll See But Only If We Rightly Respond To Him Because If We Don't Then We Won't Go Free Instead We'll Have To Face The Punishment Ourselves Which Is Much Worse Than We Think And To Show Us Jesus Now Warns Us So Reading 3.3 I'm Reading From Verse 26 As The Soldiers Led Him Away They Seized Simon From Cyrene Who Was On His Way In From The Country And Put The Cross On Him And Made Him Carry It Behind Jesus A Large Number Of

People Followed Him Including Women Who Mourned And Wailed For Him Jesus Turned And Said To Them Daughters

[18 : 46] Of Jerusalem Do Not Weep For Me Weep For Yourselves And For Your Children For The Time Will Come When You Will Say Blessed Are The Childless Women The Wombs That Never Bore And The Breasts That Never Nursed Then They Will Say To The Mountains Fall On Us And To The Hills Cover Us For If People Do These Things When The Tree Is Green What Will Happen When It Is Dry Here are another pair of responses did you notice that of following and weeping our first Simon of Cyrene is seized and forced to carry the cross behind Jesus it says Luke is the only one to use that word behind as though to give the impression that he is following Jesus and I wonder if

Luke deliberately writes it like this to remind us of what Jesus said earlier in Luke's gospel that if we were to be his disciples we must take up our cross daily and follow him and so I wonder if Luke uses Simon's involuntary response of taking the cross and following Jesus to remind us of what our voluntary response to him should be either way we're clearly told that the women followed him as well but we're also told they were weeping for him weren't we no doubt because they loved him and knew he didn't deserve this and yet Jesus says don't weep for me you see he doesn't want their sympathy after all he chose to go to the cross rather he redirects their weeping to themselves and Jerusalem in fact only a few chapters ago Jesus himself wept for Jerusalem why well because of the judgment that was coming upon them and here he says to the women it will be so bad that you would prefer the mountains to fall on top of you which is pretty bad isn't it you see Jerusalem had largely rejected Jesus as the king who could save them from judgment and if you reject the only one who can save you then well will you be saved I mean imagine you're at the beach on holidays and you get caught in a rip and the only lifeguard on duty comes out to you and reaches out his hand to rescue you and you you reject the only rescuer then will you be rescued no that's what verse 31 means that tricky verse verse 31 for if the people do these things of rejecting Jesus like the religious leaders who refuse to believe like Herod who mocks like Pilate who caves if they do these things when the tree is green that is when it's not time for burning green wood doesn't make for good firewood when it's not time for judgment then what will happen when it's dry when it is ready for burning when it is time for judgment will they be saved no in other words this is a warning not to reject

Jesus because he's the only one who can save us I know people don't like hearing these kind of stern warnings today but warning people is actually part of loving people when grandkids or nieces or nephews not to put their hand through the wire at the zoo in case it gets bitten off it's a loving thing right Jesus warns us because he loves us and he doesn't want to see us suffer judgment for our sin and so he says I don't want your sympathy to come along a couple times a year to pay your respects I want your genuine faith that follows me all year round for only genuine faith in him is faith that saves which brings us to our last reading and point thanks Harry reading from verse 32 two other men both criminals were also led out with him to be executed when they came to the place called the skull they crucified him there along with the criminals one on his right the other on his left Jesus said father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing and they divided up his clothes by casting lots the people stood watching and the rulers even sneered at him they said he saved others let him save himself if he is God's Messiah the chosen one the soldiers also came up and mocked him they offered him wine vinegar and said if you are the king of the Jews save yourself there was a written notice above him which read this is the king of the Jews one of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him aren't you the Messiah save yourself and us but the other criminal rebuked him don't you fear God he said since you are under the same sentence we are punished justly for we are getting what our deeds deserve but this man has done nothing wrong then he said

[24 : 41] Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom Jesus answered him truly I tell you today you will be with me in paradise it was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon for the sun stopped shining and the curtain of the temple was torn in two Jesus called out with a loud voice father into your hands I commit my spirit when he had said this he breathed his last the centurion seeing what had happened praised God and said surely this was a righteous man well before we get to that last response did you notice in verses 35 to 39 how often the word save comes up they mock him save yourself and save us and the irony of course is it's by not saving himself that he can save others for as we've said he died to take our punishment

in our place so that we can be saved from it and like

Barabbas or like Ashley Good's baby daughter we can then go free and live free to live with God now which is what the curtain being torn into is really all about the temple curtain used to separate people from God but now it's torn apart so that people can come even closer to God here again is our memory verse Christ the king died!

for sins! for all the righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God free to live with God now which gives us more peace and purpose more hope and help in this life and the guarantee of life in paradise later like Jesus said to that second criminal but only if we respond like that second criminal how well he practiced his ABCs didn't he in verse 41 he admitted his guilt he said we are getting what our deeds deserve that's to admit their guilt and then B he believed Jesus could save him verse 42 he says Jesus remember me how he's about to die but he genuinely believes Jesus can save him even through death such that he says remember me save me through death and bring me to life in your kingdom which brings us to the sea he confesses or acknowledges that Jesus is king notice he says when you come into your kingdom in other words he's acknowledging that Jesus has a kingdom and he is the king of that kingdom so here's the ABCs to be saved admit our guilt believe Jesus can save us and confess Jesus is king of us and when we do Jesus death becomes effective for us!

after our next song I'm going to give you a chance to practice your ABC if you'd like to with a simple prayer I'll read it one line at a time and you can echo it quietly in your head and heart if you like but before we sing that song and give you a chance to reflect if that's something you'd like to do or not for us who have already done that then our response is to keep following Jesus every day we're to take up our cross and follow him like Simon of Cyrene did involuntarily we're to do it voluntarily even if it means sacrificing things it's what taking up your cross means it means sacrificing stuff to follow whether it's sacrificing

[29 : 38] Sunday mornings to meet as God's people or sacrificing our comfort to serve others or sacrificing your holiday to drive back here an hour and a half this morning to come to this service as I know one family did or sacrificing our rights to forgive others I mean Jesus gave up his right for justice and amazingly prayed Father forgive them can you believe that and so Jesus is worth following tomorrow means our election our federal election is two weeks away tomorrow can you imagine Albo or Dutton being so forgive like that or die for us like that or guarantee paradise like that or rise from the dead to prove all that as we'll see Jesus on Sunday no Jesus is worth more than our vote he's worth following for life even taking up our cross and sacrificing things to put him above all things that's how we're to respond that's the

C part of ABC confess him our king in life whose loving rule is for our good anyway but if you haven't done the first A and B yet and you want Jesus death to be effective for your sin then we're going to pray a simple prayer after our next song but first let's stand and sing and reflect on the father's love and his son's sacrifice and that