

# The Moral Structure of the St. Matthew Passion

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you, Jack. I'm going to get right into things, but first I should mention that Nishota House had its graduation or commencement ceremony on Thursday, and we left right after that.

And our speaker and recipient of honorary degree was J.I. Packer, who was on his way from there to England, where I think he is now. And I told him that I was coming here to St. John's Shaughnessy, and he asked to send greetings to you.

Okay, I'm not going to remark about holidaying and spending holidays in Sweden, because I do work, but it's devoted to different things.

And I have a few other projects, but this, working on Bach and the St. Matthew Passion in particular, is a real labor of love.

The St. Matthew Passion can be approached in many ways, and I think it repays the analysis that you can give to it on many different levels.

[ 1 : 24 ] And I don't come here before you as a musical expert, and there are a lot of studies on the techniques that Bach used, the different tonalities and the key changes and how the structure reflects that.

There are even studies of the symbolism, numbers that are worked into the St. Matthew Passion. What I offer is a theological view, and really, even more particularly, the moral point of view of the St. Matthew Passion.

What I offer today is an observation based on the tension between orthodoxy in Lutheranism and pietism.

And you can think of this as the objective aspect of faith versus the subjective. The heart renewed is the pietist concern, and the doctrine of the church is the objective orthodox point of view.

And even now, in Lutheran denominations like the Missouri Synod, there's still this tension between pietism and orthodoxy.

[ 2 : 53 ] Pietism was a renewal movement in the Lutheran church, similar to the Wesleyan movement in the Church of England and the evangelical revival, and parallel, too, to the charismatic renewal in the last generation or two.

In the generation before Bach, as the late 17th century, you had Spanier, who was famous for the work *Pia Desideria*, Holy Desire, and Franke, who founded the University of Holland, and von Sinsendorf, Moravian.

These were leading figures in the pietist movement, which focused on the need for inner change in a person's life, conversion in the new life of the Spirit.

The people who are interested in orthodoxy, I think, downplay the pietist side of Bach.

And that's one of the themes of this talk, is to focus a little bit more on how Bach incorporates the pietist interest in the changed heart, and transforms that in the St. Matthew Passion.

[ 4 : 18 ] This is my first step at this project, and so it's a little bit unformed. I think some ideas are pretty clear, at least they're clear in my head.

And I'll try to allow time, ample time, for questions so you can help me clarify certain points. But I'm preparing a lecture series next Holy Week in 2010, based on St. Matthew Passion.

So, this is the first step in that process. One more note about translation. I have a smattering of German, so I don't come to you as a musical expert or a German expert.

But one of the hurdles, I think, in appreciating the St. Matthew Passion, is the florid nature of the devotional language of 18th century piety.

That's the pietist inheritance. And I think people skip over that. Because it seems overly sentimental to us in places.

[ 5 : 36 ] And the English translations aren't very helpful. And if you have a recording of the St. Matthew Passion, and follow along with the text, sometimes, some of the English translations are based on singing texts, so that they match the notes.

And they're even less close to the original, and can seem even more difficult to understand. But that's one of the hurdles that we face. I'm going to start the... Okay, that worked out okay. So far. The first time I heard the St. Matthew Passion was probably... I may have heard parts of it as a boy, because my father had a recording, but I don't remember listening to it. Until 1973, Holy Week, at the annual performance of St. Matthew Passion at Metropolitan United Church in Toronto.

[ 6 : 54 ] This was early 1970s. And I went for several years in a row. Melville Cook was the organist there and had been trained in England in the 20s or 30s.

And he brought over the kind of Victorian approach to the St. Matthew Passion with the congregation singing the chorale section.

So the words were in English, and we got to stand up and sing. That's out of fashion now. Often it's just presented as a concert piece. And we can be a little scornful of the Victorian approach to things, but there is something valuable about that personal participation in the meaning of the St. Matthew Passion, which is what I want to address partly as well.

I remember after the first time I heard it, I went out and bought the recording by Carl Rechter, and I remember listening in my student room with keen interest.

And I'd been listening to the Mass in B minor for a year or two, and had found that work of Bach profoundly moving. And I remember listening to the last of the record, the sides of the record, these old LPs.

[ 8 : 26 ] And after the death of Jesus, but feeling a little bit let down, I thought at the time, because the penultimate number was a kind of goodbye to Jesus.

Lord Jesus, fare thee well. And more sentimental even in German, Mein Jesus, gute Nacht. The disciples are gathered around the tomb saying good night to Jesus.

And then the concluding chorus seems even more sentimental. In tears of grief, dear Lord, we leave thee. Hearts cry to thee, O Savior dear, sleep in peace.

Sleep thou in the Father's breast. Let's listen to part of that. This is 15 and 16. So this is number 77. And the beginning of 78. This is my Jesus.

[ 9 : 46 ] Good night. Good night. Good night.

Thank you. Thank you.

And then we'll just listen to the first part of this concluding chorus. We sit down with tears and cry to thee in the tomb.

Sleep well. Sleep well.

Okay, let's now. Imagine, I remember coming to the end of the St. Matthew Passion with a sense of disappointment.

[ 12 : 03 ] Is this how it ends? No resurrection. Just saying goodbye and weeping at the tomb of Jesus.

I was very impressed by parts of the Passion as I had listened to it. But it ends with a kind of invented scene at the grave with non-scriptural sentimental poetry.

The scene is invented because the main group of disciples, according to the Bible, seem to be in hiding at this time and out of sight until they heard of Jesus' resurrection.

Imagine yourself entering the wonderful space of Chartres Cathedral in France or St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

And you see a large painting of Solomon's head of Christ. Or the popular Victorian painting on the left of Holman Hunt, knocking at the door of your heart.

[ 13 : 08 ] And then you maybe hear the choir singing, softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling. Or, just as I am, without one plea.

And the noble, majestic structure of the cathedral doesn't fit the art or the music.

And the sentimental piety seems to be out of place with the nobility and strength that you find in the St. Matthew Passion.

Now, I was familiar with some of Bach's cantatas and knew that Bach wrote for the church year.

And that these special passions of St. John and St. Matthew had a specific liturgical function for a Good Friday service.

Not just Holy Week in general, but Good Friday itself. And that explains why it ends where it does. The resurrection does not occur until Sunday.

[14:16] But, I was still a little dissatisfied with the narrow range and with the sentimental texts compared with my beloved Mass in B Minor.

As a vehicle of the Gospel, think about it. The standard Mass, the musical Mass, Catholic or Anglican, seems much better. Because you have a Kyrie and you have a Gloria with the acknowledgement of sin, but praise to Christ and a Trinitarian focus.

The Creed offers a summary of the Gospel with the Incarnation, Atonement, and two references to the resurrection, Christ and our own resurrection.

The holiness of God in the Sanctus, God's mercy through Christ's death in the Agnes day, achieving reconciliation and peace. You have the whole thing. There's a much wider theological and emotional range offered to the composer.

Take Handel's Messiah. And many of you I know are familiar with that. It's entirely scriptural. So, beloved of Protestants. And within the whole thing, when you have Easter and Christmas sections together, you have ample coverage of themes of human sin, God's response, salvation in Christ, belief in the resurrection, and the coming of Christ's kingdom.

[15:47] It's all there. What's going on in the St. Matthew Passion? This is the score of the very first choral, Come Ye Daughters, in Bach's own handwriting.

What gives the St. Matthew Passion the integrity and power that it undoubtedly has, and that many people appreciate about it? And when you think of secular people interested in the music, they have to skip over the devotional sections of it, I would think.

I think the standard explanation is just the sheer musical genius of Bach, and also his psychological insight that he was able to combine.

His exceptional skill as a composer was able to transcend the limitations of the forms that he worked in. And his personal faith and commitment are transformed into a kind of universal humanity that people around the world can appreciate.

Now that's the sort of thing you get in your notes and commentaries on the St. Matthew Passion. But the explanation that I offer incorporates the devotional and pietistic aspect as the clue to the structure of the work and its powerful impact for Christians.

[17:29] It is not only a powerful musical expression of the Passion of Christ with personal reflection, but the personal devotional response of the Christian provides a parallel structure to what is going on with Christ and his Passion.

And we can see that's where salvation and resurrection are operating in the St. Matthew Passion. There's the basic narrative from the Gospel of Matthew, mainly chapters 26 and 27, sung by the evangelist and also by individuals for the parts of Peter and the high priests and Pilate and so on. And choirs are sometimes used when the group of disciples are commenting or the crowd is shouting to Pilate to crucify Jesus. And you see on your sheet the left column where it says mostly evangelists, but you also see choir parts.

That's the narrative parts of the St. Matthew Passion. And that's the biblical text. And Bach follows the text very closely.

[18:58] Then there are theological or devotional reflections expressed by soloists or by the choir, sometimes in chorale melodies, often using hymn tunes that the congregation would be familiar with and would sing and then they're incorporated in the musical passion.

The passion chorale, which we know in our hymnals as, O Sacred Head, Now Wounded, appears in five different places with different words, of course, and different harmonizations.

The narrative begins with the preparations for the Passover, the anointing of Jesus at Bethany, the Last Supper, prediction of the denial, the garden in Gethsemane.

The disciples are asked to watch and pray, then the betrayal and the arrest of Jesus. That's part one. Then part two on the other side, we have the trial before Caiaphas and Pilate, the denial of Peter, the scourging and the mocking of Jesus, culminating in the crucifixion and burial.

The reflections point out the cruel ironies involved in the treatment of Jesus. And there are many opportunities to contrast the innocent suffering of Jesus with the sinfulness of, not only the crowd and the disciples, but the sins of the whole world, including ours.

[20:28] And Bach is able to draw each one of us in so that the drama of Christ's passion is for each person and for the whole world.

When the disciples wonder about the costly ointment and the anointing of Jesus, then the reflection, which going back on the other side to part one, there's the aria number 10, on the grief and weeping to sin that we should feel.

That's what we're called to offer to Christ. As a parallel of the offering that was made at the anointing, we bring our own confessions as a sacrifice.

When Jesus speaks about the one who will betray him, and the disciples in turn ask, is it I? Is it I? This is number 15. Then we have the somber truth brought home to us in a corral, which is number 16.

It is I, the understanding Christian, who realizes the truth. I'm speaking for all of us. That we get the insight that it is us, is each one of us who binds Jesus and who nails him to the tree.

[ 21 : 57 ] And that's what that corral expresses. After Jesus' last supper, we have the beautiful and cheerful aria. It's not all doom and gloom, by any means. And the St. Matthew, there are lovely arias in major keys that express in a positive way, and this is one of them, number 19.

Ich will dir mein Herz schenken. I will give thee my heart. Jesus, Savior, I am thine. Come and dwell within my heart.

Dearer than the world, beside, is the Savior who hath died. At many other points in the narrative, we have such responses expressed in dramatic recitatives, beautiful arias, familiar chorales.

When Jesus remained silent with his accusers, and after Peter denied Jesus and heard the cock crow, after Pilate addresses the crowd, when the soldiers mocked Jesus and spat on him, when Simon of Cyrene carries the cross part of the way to Golgotha, when Jesus yields up his spirit.

At those points, you have extremely poignant reflections on the meaning and significance. So the external action is in the passion narrative with the climax at the trial of Jesus, the scourging and the crucifixion.

[ 23 : 29 ] Everything builds up to that point. Jesus on the cross in number 71. And that's that the evangelist narrates Jesus giving up his spirit.

And then in number 73, you have the tearing in two of the veil in the temple and the recognition by the centurion. Truly, this was the Son of God.

Then the devotional and reflective arias and choral responses, numbers 74 to 78, are commentary on the action and personal reflection after the death and removal of Jesus.

But as I mentioned towards the beginning, that seems like an anti-climax in some ways. reading I've come to follow the reading I've come to, it follows from seeing the division of the St. Matthew Passion not as an arbitrary thing between parts one and two, but fully planned and designed that way.

And that's that's really the heart of my starting point for this analysis. It's not just a convenient place for a break and to have a have a little drink at the at the concert when you hear the St. Matthew Passion.

[ 25 : 08 ] Originally, in the context of the Good Friday Liturgy, the congregation of St. Thomas Church in Leipzig where this this was first performed, the congregation would have listened to a sermon between the parts.

And this would have been a good point for the pastor to preach a stirring message on grace and the cross. It wasn't just a sermon.

There was there was a liturgy before and after. You know, the music if you think of yesterday's wedding as a kind of expanded very expanded wedding with music think of a Good Friday liturgy in that same way on a much larger scale with a four and a half hour service altogether and the musical part maybe two and a half to three hours is just a part of a larger liturgy.

The message would have been there in the music even if the pastor didn't rise to the occasion with the sermon. That occasionally happens. The pastor could have had a very busy holy week.

Part one represents the disciples in their human weakness shown in false optimism about themselves and making easy promises.

[ 26 : 47 ] here we have another selection but we're going to need disc one and number sixteen.

I have the text here but it's not probably not very readable back there is it? The print is too small. These are things I can improve on.

Peter answered in second. I will never feel annoyance. That's what Peter said.

Then Jesus predicts the denial. Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.

Peter says even if I must die I will never deny thee.

[ 28 : 03 ] And all the disciples said the same thing. now I will stand here beside thee do not bend from thee I will not depart even if thy heart is breaking and thy heart shall grow pale in the last hang of death then I will grasp thee in my arms and laugh.

Yeah, we can turn it off. That's an example of a sentimental poetry and it's not the best English translation either.

But the point is that here the disciples are making these fancy promises to Christ that they will stand beside him and Peter denies that he's going to deny the Lord.

Part one has these beautiful arias hell and Part Jesus, the drama is really brought out in number 33. Behold, my Savior now is taken.

But it's the chorus that has these lightnings and thunder and, you know, the whole cosmos is turned upside down because Jesus, who's the creator of the cosmos, is taken into custody.

[ 30 : 23 ] People have called that number the most dramatic musical piece written in Baroque style. That's the power that Bach was able to express there.

But the disciples then abandon Jesus and flee from the scene. And those are the final words of the evangelist in section 34, when the evangelist text is sung.

The very last words in German, Da verließen ihn alle Jünger und frohe. The disciples, all the disciples, abandoned Jesus and fled.

And that's where part one ends. The disciples leaving Jesus. Where does that, you know, where does that leave all their fine promises about remaining firm and staying with Jesus?

Completely shattered. From the devotional and the relational viewpoint, the disciples reach their absolute low point.

[ 31 : 38 ] They show their inconstancy and their faithlessness, their inability not only to watch and pray with Jesus in the garden, but simply to remain with him.

They leave the scene entirely. This is where God's grace comes in. God supplies grace at the point of human weakness and need.

And what we get next is, and this closes part one, is this final chorale, number 35, by O man, thy heavy sin lament.

O mensch, bevain thine sin de gros. We aren't going to listen to it because of the time.

But there's a short, it's really a powerful summary of the gospel. And in my reading, this is where Bach brings in God's grace because it describes Jesus leaving, leaving his throne in heaven.

[ 32 : 46 ] Beautiful, the beautiful music expresses the incarnation. Christ descending. And it's perfectly brought out in the strings. And you have references to Jesus' ministry, to raising the dead, and healing the sick.

And it's not just the sick in his time. It's healing all sickness. All conkeit is taken away by Christ. It's a eschatological vision that Christ, coming to this earth, has dealt with death and sickness.

And then it points to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and carrying the burdens of our sins. So you have the gospel in a nutshell there. And it represents the beginning of the change in the disciples, which results from the grace of God.

So that means that part two is the revitalization of the disciples. I'll change this so you can get the words there.

I'm not going to refer further to that. But in part two, the disciples are revitalized and the structure and the music of Bach shows the pattern of the development of new life in all Christian disciples, including us.

[ 34 : 14 ] First, the recognition of the loss of Jesus and the falseness of the world. And you realize just how lost you are without Christ.

Because that's the opening of part two, is this sense of Christ being taken captive. Where does that leave us? You get Peter's denial here that he belongs to Christ.

He denies that he belongs to Christ, but then he confesses and repents in one of the most famous arias of the entire Passion. Er bar medesh. Have mercy on me, O Lord.

Followed by the corral, number 48, Lamb of God, I fall before thee. For I have strayed from thee, yet I have returned again. For thy son has reconciled us.

Thy grace and mercy is far greater than any sin I can confess. So that's the awareness of the overwhelming nature of God's grace.

[ 35 : 24 ] grace. And then, another aspect in discipleship is simple trust in God. The third version of the Passion Chorale, which is number 53, commit your way to Jesus.

It's a simple confidence that God will direct our ways. The next stage is identification with the suffering of Christ as part of discipleship, carrying the cross.  
After the scenes with Pilate and the Roman soldiers, you have the aria, Come, sweet cross, number 66. And this could seem modern, again, this kind of florid, pietistic language.  
But as a depiction of a necessary ingredient of following Christ, it depicts the willingness of the disciple of Jesus to share his suffering.  
So we have these aspects of Christian discipleship. Awareness of the need for Christ, repentance, trust in God's purposes, the willingness to suffer with Christ.  
[ 36 : 40 ] And this results in the close relationship of the disciple to Jesus. Abiding in Christ, our union with Christ.

That is, that is the pietistic theme, if you like. The, the moral theme of the St. Matthew Passion is our close connection to Christ, which, which has to be accomplished by grace.  
grace. That is the work of grace and the revitalization of the disciples. So at the moment of crucifixion, you have the climax of the Passion of Christ, the objective doctrine of the atonement, and that's highlighted following the gospel narrative, the forgiveness of sins, the atonement, the accomplishment of God's plans to deal with sin, and the rending of the temple, but the crucifixion of Christ also represents the climax of the rehabilitation and the revitalization of the disciples.  
It's the climax of the theme of grace, of faithful discipleship and union with Christ. Christ. And the reason why I confidently talk about this in this way is that the corral that Bach supplies just after Jesus dies, in this number 72 here, doesn't deal with any doctrine of the atonement or that, you know, finally our sins are forgiven or, you know, now I'm free of guilt and I can live confidently and so on because my sins are forgiven, it points to the relationship with Christ at the most challenging time for each one of us at the point of death.

So Jesus has just given up his spirit and then the corral sings and this is the passion corral again.  
[ 39 : 07 ] When I depart this life, then don't depart from me. When I must go through death, then you will stand by me.

When I am filled with fear and terror grips my heart, then rescue me from anguish by your redeeming pain. It's the last of the five settings of the Passion Corral with marvelous chromatic harmony and it speaks not so much of atonement but of staying with Christ.  
there's no promise of human faithfulness or performance. It makes no promises on our part. It's simply gazing trustfully at Christ.

So this is in contrast, obviously, to the false promises of abiding with Christ which we find in part one, number 23, which is also the Passion Corral tune.

I will stand beside you and never depart. Well, that was a false promise because the disciples abandoned Jesus. But here this is utterly sincere and faithful.

[ 40 : 32 ] It's a commitment to Christ generated by grace and reflective of the confidence placed not in our own strength but in the strength of the crucified Christ.

And this is beautifully, simply, profoundly brought out in the chromatic harmonization incorporating the pain of Christ but resolves into an E major chord.

I wonder if we could play that. I think we have time. It's number three. Oh, this one? Yeah. CD 3, number 10. I'm almost done.

I'm almost done. There'll be sitting in Germany of course.

Can you turn up later? ... ..

[ 41 : 47 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. That love for Christ and union with him results in peace and joy and confidence. The lovely bass aria, Make My Heart Clean, number 75, which comes after this, expresses that sense of joy and confidence.

May the world depart from my heart and Christ come in. That joyful confidence is the dominant tone. And we can now see the final numbers of the Passion that I referred to that disappointed me, my first hearing of the St. Matthew Passion.

We can see these in their proper light. Instead of the sentimental lament for the death and burial of Jesus, it really is the calm confidence of the disciple who knows he belongs to Jesus and knows that Jesus will remain with him always.

[ 43 : 52 ] Or her. In the final chorus, number 78, we are sitting here with our tears and crying to you in the grave.

This is meant by Bach to be the utter contrast to the disciples at the end of part one who abandoned Jesus.

They leave Jesus, but here they're staying. And that's the contrast that makes all the difference. In part one, they leave Jesus and selfishly nurse their disappointment and give in to their fears. But the death of Jesus, when you think about it, the death of Jesus is even a greater trauma than his capture.

But the disciples here remain faithful. They're not leaving. Now, this is extra-biblical. An artistic license.

[ 44 : 59 ] I think we have to grant Bach that. That we can surmise that most of the disciples did indeed hide and cower until they knew of the resurrection.

Maybe with some exceptions. And if there were disciples remaining at the grave, there were probably more women than men at that time.

But Bach gives us this scene of sorrow. It is sorrowful, but also of serene confidence.

Because these disciples show the reality of grace in their lives. Their lives are identified with Jesus. They trust in God. And they have the willingness to suffer with him. And it is that development and manifestation of faithfulness and discipleship that is Bach's representation of the power of grace to transform and provide the reality of the new life.

[ 46 : 04 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Time for questions.

Thank you. Just get rid of this here. Oh yeah, that's my screen saver.

There is Bach with shade. Yes, Bill. Who was the sponsor for 2019?

Who directed him to benefit him? Well, he had a job at... Okay, the question was, how did Bach come to write this?

And was it commissioned? Whose instructions? He had the job of cantor at St. Thomas Leipzig and St. Nicholas also.

[ 47 : 12 ] So he was responsible for the whole music program. Which, and traditionally, the tradition had developed by this time that there would be a musical passion for Good Friday.

Heinrich Schütz has written a passion of Matthew that you can compare and see that there was a tradition.

So Bach didn't invent the form, but he took it to an entirely new level. So the omission of the salvation of the people on the cross was a political omission, didn't you say?

The church may not have appreciated your... Well, you mean you think that's not in the text. I may not have highlighted it here. But as far as I know... Now, I haven't gone through it word by word, but Bach is not leaving anything out from the passion narrative in Matthew.

So he's got all the scripture there, and it's even written in red. That's his reverence for the text. Yes, Sheila.

[ 48 : 27 ] Thank you so much for this. I don't think I'll ever listen to it again without thinking of your description. Well, I hope not. One of the things that you were suggesting, I think, between part one and part two, the end of part one, everybody is going to Jesus' rescue.

I will stand with you till death, etc. Those are the statements before. We'll all go and help. And at the end of part two, they understand that Jesus is going to stand by them.

They seem to have gotten the point of salvation, which was not clear to them seemingly until he died. Right. And that's all being developed in part two, that process of conversion.

And then the union with Christ is realized and expressed at the moment of crucifixion.

You know, that the disciple has the right response there. Question? This question is very well-plungated, but that very emphasis would seem to conflict with Catholic theology somewhat.

[ 49 : 37 ] Do you comment on that? Yes. Right now, I'm only worrying about Lutheran theology. The Catholics of the country of Reformation responded to this music.

That's a very good question. I haven't done research along those lines really yet. I know that there's at least one Catholic lover, the theologian lover of Bach, who called Bach the fifth evangelist.

So Catholics can appreciate Bach just as much. Now, whether there would be whether there would be a difference in theology here, I doubt, because I think the pietistic devotional side also parallels the mystical poetry of some of the Catholic saints.

And the spiritual tradition that the Catholics had. Now, which was a bit divorced from their official theology. But there's definitely a strong strain in Catholic piety as well that talks about union of the soul with Jesus.

And so they would be familiar with that kind of language. Yep. Thank you very much for your presentation. I liked it very much. Do you know Johann Giermann's Holy Meditations?

[ 51 : 12 ] Yes. One of the examples of the Orthodox theologians. And I would like to ask you, this Holy Meditations of Johann Giermann and Bach's Matthew Passion, are they good examples to say that the often made opposition between Orthodox theology and emotional pietism is false?

Yes. Yeah. That was going to be my answer, is that I think Gerhard is like Bach in being able to combine the two and not have to choose.

Yeah. Yeah. Very good. And another question. Some weeks ago, we had the minor mass of Bach in Vancouver.

And we could learn some of the mathematics which is taken to serve theology. The numbers are all to serve certain points of theology.

Is it in here too? Yes. I haven't gone into that much. I indicated right at the beginning that I'm aware of some of these studies. And Bach had that kind of mind that liked puzzles and numbers symbolism.

[ 52 : 25 ] People have pointed out that the five-fold usage of the Passion Corral is meant to symbolize the five wounds of Christ possibly.

When the disciples, when Jesus says, one of you is going to betray me, and the disciples say, it is I, it is I, the choir repeats it. And it's exactly 11 times that you hear, it is I.

So the 11 disciples, and you hear, is it I, exactly 11 times. So Bach liked the use of numbers and symbolism.

And he obviously is able to work it, work it in to the larger structure. Other questions are out to Harvey.

Would you give us some advice then? In public liturgy, pulpits, or any other Christian venue, do you like or dislike the quote, sweet language of I-publish?

[ 53 : 30 ] Should it be private? Does it ever go public? What do you think? Yeah. I think, Katie, that's a problem I have with the translation. I don't, I don't, I would prefer trying to reduce the sweetness and make it less sentimental because that, that fits our, our sense of, of language, use of language now in our generation.

And I think Bach would be more approachable. People would be able to appreciate the St. Matthew Passion better. I think if they had more straightforward down-to-earth translations and less syrupy, if you like.

But, but that's an interesting point of, you know, maybe it's meant for personal piety. How about him? You mean my own personal preference?

Well, we've seen some of the pious hymns. Yes. And I like them, but maybe they grow, they grow cloying if you sing them often. Is that what, is that the point you're making?

Yeah, I think you have to fit the occasion. I, I had to imagine the scene of walking into St. Paul's Cathedral in London and then hearing softly and tenderly Jesus' calling.

[ 54 : 55 ] It doesn't fit, does it? But there is a place for softly and tenderly Jesus' calling. It's me and his high school. It's maybe somewhat tangential, but that follows Harvey's question.

Where is the fire distribution in our Anglican worship at the moment? I think it's really reflecting on some of the controversies that we've put ourselves into.

But the fire distribution is notably absent in the sense of the warmth and the love and the expression of the commitment. I think that's a good observation.

And, you know, here I'll admit to you, you know, I teach at an Anglo-Catholic seminary and I like the musical tradition, the richness of the Anglican and Catholic heritage heritage that we have.

But I am an evangelical at heart. And I think that's part of the reason why I want to draw out and understand and put some order and meaning into this pietistic side of our heritage and of this immensely wonderful work.

[ 56 : 19 ] and I'm not going to say too much about, I don't really know, can't really say about our Anglican hymnody and so on, except that it doesn't surprise me if they want to exclude the evangelical piety.

there was a country, you remember the old blue hymnal that the Anglican Church of Canada has used and there was a whole section called Evangelistic Hymns and in the preface it said we don't recommend these hymns for use, but in certain rural areas of our church that haven't sort of progressed enough, this is their musical taste.

Yeah, so there is, yeah, that's right, there is that kind of snobbishness and it would be good to get over that. Yeah. How are we going for time?

Very well, actually. Okay. I did leave a musical selection or two out, but I wanted to make sure we got to the end and also have time.

Anybody else who has their own observations or maybe your own experience of listening to or singing the St. Matthew Passion?

[ 57 : 55 ] I heard it two times, I guess. I think it's very important that the new generations coming up to these performances get good information from them.

It's not just the music. You must have some information about the structure and the theology of it. Otherwise, it's just an emotional event.

Definitely. If you just allow me to sort of give you a very summary capsule of what I'm trying to say, is that I think the standard interpretation of the St.

Matthew Passion is that you have this Passion narrative, the objective events in Christ, and then you have this personal reflection and these beautiful arias and corals kind of reflecting on that. And it just goes that way, develops that way. But, the part one and part two, the reaction of the disciples is very different.

[ 59 : 15 ] And you have the end of the human strength of the disciples in part one, and then their revitalization. by grace in part two. I think that's the moral structure of the St.

Matthew Passion. Good music always triggers quite a bit of sentimentality. And I think there's enough warnings from Jesus about that.

When he spoke to the women weeping when he was on the way to the cross, you know, don't weep for me. So, you have to be cautious and keep kosher in the sense that you possibly can.

And I think what Stefan said, that's the background of really what we're listening to is that can keep us straight each. Straight each.

Right. The kind of answer to that is that we're sometimes so cerebral that we don't express emotion at all. That's technical on both sides.

[ 60 : 19 ] Are we not making a confusion between sentimentality and expression of feeling? Because I think of sentimentality as wishing to feel something which you don't.

Which is not a thing. And I think the expression of grief is good too. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. That's... Is that correct? Thank you.

Do you think you can give any guidelines or your thoughts on what is the proper place for emotions? How are they informed? What use are they? It seems a bit subjective to say that certain things are maybe too emotional.

Any thoughts on... what emotions are good for them? That's a huge topic. But I have given it some thought because the moral psychology is kind of the area in which I have been working.

And I think the short answer is that emotions are linked with reason. that is they express our relationship to the world and to other people.

[ 61 : 43 ] And they're not just irrational things going on inside that have a sort of parallel existence. We're meant to integrate our emotions with our intellect and will.

And emotions are meant to be trained so that we begin to react properly to the right things in the right way. That is, if you don't respond to the death of a loved one with grief, there's something wrong with you.

But you don't want it to be overblown or expressed in a wrong way. So we have to learn to manage emotions. They need to be trained, but they need to be directed in the right way.

So that's the basic answer. Was the conflict between the Fidus and the Orthodox merely a question of the style of devotional language?

Were there some significant doctrinal differences? Yeah, not so much differences in doctrine, but differences about how the faith is to be expressed.

[ 62 : 59 ] think of the opposition to the Wesleys in the 18th century. I think we evangelicals would tend to think some of these clergy and bishops who were opposed to the efforts of the Wesleys simply weren't converted themselves.

They weren't interested in the gospel. They were interested in their pension plan or the equivalent at the time. And that's overly simplistic, but it's the changed heart that you want to see. I think some of the excesses, but sometimes it's called enthusiasm, you know, in a pejorative way, that this whole type of Christianity that emphasizes feelings and so on. And there are certain dangers with that, so that the orthodox critics of enthusiasm and pietism have a legitimate critique sometimes that feeling gets substituted for thought. And then if your feelings aren't there and if you don't feel particularly close to Jesus, then you lose your faith because the feeling isn't there. And that's the danger. So that's why you need this combination of good doctrine, sound teaching, and appropriate emotional response. [ 64 : 36 ] I think that's what we should be aiming for. Yes? Perhaps I'm thinking that I think that possibly the sense of whole thanksgiving and praise is absent here.

It seems that this is a very gospel-oriented narrative. You mean the same Matthew Passion? Bach is leaving out Paul's sense of thanksgiving in his poem writings. The sense of thanksgiving and praise. Bach is writing a St. Matthew Passion. So I'm arguing that he has a pretty good response to the impact of Jesus' Passion.

Given the fact that it's a pretty narrow range that you have to deal with compared to Handel's Messiah or a Mass, you have a lot more opportunity to bring in other Christian themes and doctrine. [ 65 : 52 ] But even within the limitations of this Passion narrative ending with the crucifixion and burial, you still have the gospel brought out.

Now, it's true, he's not going to have everything you'd like to see. But there's a lot more there than he's commonly seen.

I think that's safe to say. Okay, thank you very much for your presentation. Thank you. Thank you.