

Signs and Prophecies

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Preacher: Rev Gordon Matheson

[0 : 00] Well, good evening. Can I welcome all of you to our service this evening and also those who are joining us online.! It's good that we can gather to worship God together. You'll have seen the notices sheet. I don't think there's much that really needs additional attention, but we'll be praying through some of the items that are mentioned there later in the service.

Let's begin our worship tonight, praising God from Psalm 96a. This is in Sing Psalms, page 126 of the Blue Book. Amen.

We're going to sing through to verse 10, so six stanzas, and we'll stand to sing.

Let's pray.

His salvation, giving, let all the earth proclaim. His glory and his mighty deeds to every hand he quail.

[1 : 52] And greater awesome is the Lord, within the gods of him.

One other cross, the wooden stone, the Lord made heaven's night.

All power and majesty are his, he dwells in glorious light.

All nations do the Lord astray, the glory that is true.

Glory and strength has cried to God, and places in the new.

[2 : 59] Enter his course with joy and ring, and offering with you.

Worship the Lord in holy fear, all earth before him power.

Tell every man the Lord is king, he stannishes the air.

And cannot move, the Lord will judge, the people's in his truth.

Well, let us bow our heads in prayer to God. Our heavenly Father, we gather this evening with an intention to declare to every land your glory and your mighty deeds.

[4 : 17] Father, that tonight ought to lead us to a place of recognition of the greatness of Jesus as we gather in worship.

And so I pray tonight, as we gather, that you would help us to guard our hearts. Help us to examine ourselves and to purge away and push out of our attention and our thoughts all of the things that so often clamor for our attention.

Help us to imagine all of the things that we would sacrifice much, because in our hearts we would make gods of all manner of things in our lives. Help us instead to see who our God truly is.

And help us to worship tonight in spirit and in truth. Help us therefore to see the glory of Jesus. Help us to see what the writers of the Gospels wanted us to see.

Help us to see the marvel of a Savior who died for sinners. And we ask and pray that you would bless us in this way of revealing yourself to us in Christ Jesus.

[5 : 38] Hear our confession of sin. We acknowledge, Lord, that we sin daily in our thoughts and words and actions. And as we sing a psalm which is full of significance in the passage that we're going to study tonight.

And as we sing a psalm that is full of a recognition of the great and enormous cost that our sin had to bear at the cross.

We pray that we tonight would therefore not hide from you our sin and iniquity. That we would confess what is often even the private things of our own hearts. But things which we must repent of and confess before you nonetheless.

Doing so remembering that we have in Christ Jesus a great high priest who will take away that sin from us. And so hear our confession of sin. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to continue singing to God's praise this time from Psalm 22. Again in Sing Psalms page 25 in the psalm book.

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, woman, behold your son. Then he said to the disciple, behold your mother. And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own home. Amen. This is God's word to us. Well, let's bow our heads in prayer once again to God.

Heavenly Father, we bow before you this evening. We give you thanks that we are tonight able to gather as a church in freedom and liberty, able to worship your name, able to read the Bible, and able to pray together.

[15:20] We thank you for the great privileges that are ours. We were thinking of some of these things this morning, and we thank you for that attention that we have drawn to this, to the great privilege and the gift of prayer together, the gift of fellowship and the word of God.

And we rejoice that this is the lot of your people, that this is the good things that you have given us, and these things are meant for our encouragement. And so we pray that tonight, as we gather in worship, we would indeed be encouraged.

There are many things, Lord, which discourage us along the way, and Satan often tempts us, we know, to despair, leaving us uncertain of the truth, uncertain of our place in fellowship and the love that we would receive from those around us, even uncertain perhaps at times, that there is a God who even listens to what we have to say, that Satan would tempt us in these three areas.

And so we pray that our gathering tonight would be an encouragement to one another, that we would build one another up as we address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, that we would encourage one another on the way of pilgrims in this world, recognizing that this is not our home, but that we belong to an eternal city, which has been fashioned by not human hands, but by God himself.

We pray tonight, Father, for those who are grieving. We remember the families that are mentioned, the notes and others as well. We ask and pray, Father, that you would surround them with your love and comfort, that you would uphold them in times of grief, that you would help them in the dignity of laying loved ones to rest.

[16:54] And we think, Father, of the witness that these things are as well in our communities, that there is a witness to the sensitivity that we play around death, giving thanks for the lives of those who have parted from us, but also, Lord, a testimony to the love of God that sustains us and the mercy of God that is available to those who are without hope in this world.

We do pray, Father, that through the witness of the church and the way in which we minister to those in times of grief and sorrow would truly be a blessing as well.

We pray, Father, for your blessing on the young people of our church. And we thank you for them. We thank you for the number that there are in Sunday school, for the number of young people in the various youth clubs that the church runs.

All of these great opportunities, Lord, where we're building the foundation of the truth in these lives. We pray that that would continue, not just in the work of the church, but in the work of families. We pray for parents who have responsibilities in bringing their children up to know the Lord. And we pray, Father, for that place of witness in the family home, that it would be a real blessing in the lives of young folk growing up in these days.

[18:09] We pray for wisdom for parents because the day in which we live is a complicated day. There are complicated issues that are presented in education, in our schools, but also, Lord, even in just the social settings that our young people find themselves.

Challenges we know, Father, in so many ways. And we pray that you would help and equip and bless parents in these days. We pray for the witness of the church in this, that you would help us as we seek to equip young people as they go on in life.

And we pray for the way in which we give wisdom and impart that to them. We think that, Lord, of the camps especially where young lives are given an opportunity to put together the pieces of the gospel in a unique way.

And we pray your blessing on that this summer. And we pray, Father, for alongside the work of our camps though as well, we pray for the work of our young youth fellowships and all the leaders there who are seeking by their witness to give an instruction to young lives as well.

And we pray for wisdom for them, that you would help them and bless them in the life that they live. It's so clearly seen by young people. And so any time where there is anything inauthentic, where there's anything that is full of hypocrisy, it's so quickly found.

[19 : 26] And so we pray, Father, that you would guard the witness of those who are working among young folk in our church as well. We want to pray tonight, Lord, for the work of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

We give you thanks for Roddy who was with us on Wednesday night. We thank you for the work of Mission International. We pray your blessing on that work. We think of all the different places that Roddy brought to our attention and all the different situations where that organization are able to work and minister, the folk that they're able to support.

We ask and pray that you would bless these ministries, that you would continue to set them, Lord, as a witness to the power of the gospel, that message, Lord, of reconciliation in places like Rwanda and Haiti, that message of hope in such dark places of the world like South Sudan where there is enormous persecution against your people.

And we thank you, Father, that you sustain the church in these places. And we ask and pray that you would continue to do so. We remember, Lord, the persecuted church tonight. Roddy didn't really focus on that so much.

Lord, I'm sure he was being sensitive for very practical and good reasons. But, Lord, we do pray for the persecution that arises against the church in these places. That you would, oh, Lord, be gracious and remember your people.

[20 : 44] That you would uphold them. That you would mold and shape them through these trials and sufferings. That they would become like Jesus more and more. That ongoing work of sanctification in their experience.

As we long for the same in our own experience, Lord. That all of the experiences we have in life would shape us and make us not like the world around us, but rather than being conformed to the world, we would be renewed in our minds.

Made like Jesus. Made and remade more and more in his image. And shaped to be like him. And so, Father, help us tonight as that is our great goal.

As we place ourselves under the authority of your word. Help us, Lord, to be shaped by what the word says to us. By the truth of scripture. And help us, Lord, to therefore be blessed with that transformation in our lives.

That sanctifying work of your word. We ask this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Well, before we turn to that word, we're going to sing again to God's praise in Psalm 119.

[21 : 48] This again is in Sing Psalms, page 165. verse 129.

The tune is Walton. I have to apologize to James. I was kind of stretching the presenter tonight with two long meters and part of the service. But there you go. Your statutes, Lord, are wonderful, so I obey them from my heart.

Your words, as they unfold, give light and truth to simple minds impart. With open mouth I pant and yearn to know the laws that you proclaim. Show me the mercy you extend to those who love and praise your name.

We rejoice that God does indeed show us the way in which we should live and we should sing these words with that sense of expectation as we come to God's word. Your statutes, Lord, are wonderful, so I obey them from my heart.

Let's stand to sing. Amen. singing singing The Lord has been unfulfilled, In light and truth, To simple light divine.

[23 : 27] With hope and light, I can't adhere To know the laws that you proclaim.

Show me the mercy you extend To those who love and praise your name.

I pray, my good, said till you heard, Let's sing not only in this dream, From man's oppression set me free, That you, O God, thy name obey.

Upon your step and shine your face, Teach me the sound to do the day.

My eyes shed strength of bitter tears, Because your love is not to me.

[25 : 18] Now please turn with me in your Bibles, Back to that passage that we've read.

John 19, verse 16, So they took Jesus, And he went out bearing his own cross To a place called the place of a skull, Which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

There they crucified him. Let's bow in prayer to God. Heavenly Father, As we just now turn our attention for a short time to your word, We do pray, Lord, that you would help and bless us.

We need to know what Jesus did for us. We need to know the manner of it, And we need to know the significance of it.

And we thank you that that's why John wrote these words. He wrote them so that we would believe. And we ask and pray tonight that you would therefore stir up faith in us.

[26 : 38] I want to pray especially tonight, Lord, For anyone here who doesn't yet know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Those who are still watching on from the outside.

We pray that you would bring them into the knowledge of your love, And your compassion, And your salvation for sinners.

Each one of us tonight need that grace. And so we pray that we would see clearly the grace of God in all that we see.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So, John's Gospel, If you've read it at all, you'll be familiar with the pattern of it.

He begins telling us about this person, What he calls the Logos, the Word, Who was made flesh to dwell among us.

[27 : 42] And says, We have seen his glory. And it's very clear that as John goes through his Gospel, That appearance of the glory of Jesus is not something that John focuses on at the Mount of Transfiguration.

It's not somewhere where Jesus is transformed before them and they see his radiance and the brightness of his divinity shining through. But for John, the focus of it, along with all the other Gospel writers, The focus of the glory of Jesus is really the cross.

And as John now takes us to the cross as the climax of the ministry and the work of Jesus, He's deliberately using language that echoes back to the earlier parts of his Gospel, Showing us how this whole book kind of fits together and works and combines together to give a unified whole.

And so the language that John uses, although it's incredibly simple, Right throughout the Gospel he uses very, very simple Greek in what he's writing. The language points us towards some really significant things.

It's important as well just to remember some of the simple details of this passage Before we get into a few of the finer points of that language that John's using. But just to remember the events, Jesus at this point is handed over by the Praetorian, The guards of the governor in the centre of Jerusalem in the governor's palace.

[29 : 18] He's handed over to a four-man execution squad. And we know it's a four-man execution squad, partly because we know from history that that would have been the case. And when they come to dividing up the clothing and the garments of the crucified victims, Jesus included, they divide them into four parts.

So there's probably a junior Roman non-commissioned officer along with a four-man squad who are there exercising this duty. And they're being led up to this place called Golgotha.

It's a hill just outside Jerusalem. And there they force him to carry his own cross. We know from the other Gospels that it's not possible for Jesus to do this.

He has been so badly beaten by this point that he needs assistance. And so Joseph of Arimathea has been compelled to help. But they carry the cross up to the hill and there they crucify him.

One of the things that really strikes me in all of the Gospels is the simplicity of that statement. I was chatting with somebody about this yesterday actually. It seems to me very interesting that in the world in which John and the other Gospel writers lived, the reality of crucifixion was something which was known to them in its full awfulness.

[30 : 44] And so they didn't need depictions of crucifixion to help them understand what was being done. They didn't need John to go into the gory details of it. And sometimes we maybe feel like we need that.

We need attention drawn to the details. And that's what inspires people like Mel Gibson, for example, to make films of this. We should always remember the reality of it was far worse than anything we can depict in art.

And for the Gospel writers, that comes across in the simplicity simply of the statement, there they crucified him. People knew what that meant.

They knew it was awful. And the reality of it was not lost on them. We should have, therefore, a degree of reverence and trembling as we come to these passages.

Not a grisly fascination with the reality of the death itself, but with the awfulness of what happens.

[31 : 48] But underlying it, the simple fact that God is in control. And that's because the signs and the language and the vocabulary and the events of everything that takes place around the

crucifixion are entirely predetermined.

The Roman soldiers might think, for example, that they know what they're doing. The Roman soldiers are very casual about dividing the clothing. And yet they're fulfilling prophecy. Pontius Pilate might think that he has been particularly humiliating to the Jewish people by creating this sign, the King of the Jews.

And yet that too is fulfilling God's purposes in all of these things. And even, in fact, the tender moment at the end of this passage that we've read where Jesus addresses his mother and assigns her care to John the apostle.

That too is fulfilling a purpose of God's making. That God is in complete control of these events.

[33 : 12] And tonight, that's what we need to stress and I think focus on. And where our faith needs to be nourished and fed. That in the reality of the cross, nothing happens by accident.

There's nothing to take away from the significance of what is going on here. And so there's three things that I want to draw your attention to. The sign that Pontius Pilate arranges to display.

It's significant. The seamless garment that is gambled for by the soldiers. It is significant.

And the son's love as he talks to his mother. It is also significant. The sign wasn't used in every crucifixion.

But sometimes if there was a significant crime committed. And the Romans wanted to make an example of that particular crime. And the criminal in person.

[34 : 18] They would put a sign above them on the cross. But also that sign would be carried before them as they made their way to the crucifixion. That actual pathway of journeying towards their cross.

Towards their place of execution was very much part of the humiliation itself. That's why they have to carry the cross beam themselves. It's all designed to humiliate and punish. And bring evidence of the wrath of Rome upon those who are so deserving.

So this sign would have been carried before Jesus as he made his way up to the hill. The route today is one that's maybe celebrated. If you've been to Jerusalem perhaps you've gone on the route of what's called the Via Dolorosa.

The Way of Sorrows. Almost certainly not the route Jesus took. Because Jerusalem was practically demolished by the Romans in AD 70. And again in AD 129. And the city has been rebuilt many times in between.

So the route itself probably not the same one. But nevertheless it was a place of profound sorrow. And has in some way therefore survived as a place of pilgrimage for people today.

[35 : 28] But more interesting than the post Christian era.

Or the immediate era of the apostles. More interesting than the traditions that we have built up around it. It's interesting to think about what Jesus himself would have known. Going up on this particular route.

Jerusalem is likely built on the same place that Abraham went to. To Mount Moriah. It's very likely the same hill.

And so the route that Jesus took as he goes out of Jerusalem to a place of sacrifice. Which he knows. Takes him back to the story I'm sure of Abraham and his son Isaac.

Isaac. Isaac who also carried wood up that hill. To a place of sacrifice. And then you've got the path to of exile.

[36 : 34] Jewish tradition. The Jews firmly believed in fact that Jerusalem and the mountain where the temple was in the heart of Jerusalem. Jerusalem. What was in fact the location of the Garden of Eden itself.

That this was in fact the place where God had put the first man. It was the place, the site of creation. Now whether that's true or not we don't know. But it was Jewish tradition certainly that that was the case.

And therefore the path that Jesus takes is one which again leads them to a place of understanding of exile.

That Adam and Eve when they're cast out of the garden they follow a path as it were away from the city of God's presence. That they're going away from peace with God.

To a place outside where they'll know sorrow and suffering and exile. And this is what Jesus is now doing. He's going outside the city to this place of great insecurity.

[37 : 46] We know that great insecurity is expressed for us in the words of Psalm 22. It's echoed in the words of Jesus at the cross later on when he says, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It's a place of great and profound sorrow. And it's along this path that a sign goes proclaiming in the language of the people.

In the language of both the Jewish people and the Romans. In Aramaic and Latin. And also the language of the wider world. In Greek as well. The language of commerce and trade and international relations.

The language that everyone speaks. There is this language that Pilate has proclaimed a sign. The king of the Jews.

And Pilate is telling us in his own way. He's wanting to tell us how much he hates the Jews. He wants to talk about how much he despises them. And that's what this sign is really saying.

[38 : 54] It's Pilate's way of humiliating the Jewish people. This is your king. And this is what happens to those who would proclaim themselves. Kings. Away from the authority of Caesar.

But see, Pilate is also doing something. He's reminding us of something in God's control. And without irony.

The person being led out of the city. The person being led up the path. To the place called Golgotha. He is truly. The king of the Jews.

He is the one who is there to inherit. The throne of David. And more than that. He is the son of promise.

The seed of Abraham. Through whom the whole world will be blessed. He's the son of promise. The promise that was given to Adam and Eve.

[39 : 56] As they were cast out of the garden. That one day there would be a seed. Who would bruise the head of the serpent. Who would deliver a fatal blow.

To the origin of sin. And sin's grip on them. And would therefore deliver them. And so you see Pilate in this situation. He thinks.

That by setting up this sign. And by showing the brutality of the Roman regime. And leading the anointed Messiah. Out of the city. To a place of crucifixion and rejection.

To a place of damnation really. You think Pilate thinks he's in control. And yet that's nothing can be further from the truth.

The sign's message. It says God is in control here. God's eternal purposes are here.

[40 : 52] Being met and fulfilled. God's plan is being implemented. And interestingly when Pilate puts the sign up.

He means for it to be a sign that is read and understood. He means for it to be communication. If you can think of it this way. This is Pilate's word.

Pilate's logos. And yet the person who is here. Is the eternal logos. The eternal word of God.

The eternal word of God. Made flesh. Who dwells among us. Revealing his glory. And so what Pilate means is a sign of humiliation.

And what Paul talks about when he writes to the churches later on. And says that to the Romans and to the Greeks. This crucified God is a great sign of weakness.

[41 : 50] It is in fact the glory of God manifested for us. This is what John is writing about. This is the king of the Jews.

God's anointed. The heir of David. Going to the cross. Going to the most significant event possible. The king of the Jews. The reason the sign is there.

Is not because Pilate wants to humiliate. But because God does not want us. To be in any uncertainty. About who is dying for us.

That day. The simple application for us is this. God wants you and I. To know. Who died for sinners.

[42 : 50] Who died for you. Who died for you. Who died for you. And tonight if you are a Christian.

The answer to that question. Maybe sometimes too casually trips off our tongue. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus is the one who died for me. Jesus is the one who took my sin.

And yet. We come back to these simple words. There. They crucified him. And this is what your sin and my sin tonight deserves.

It deserves the brokenness of the body of Jesus. So marred in fact that he was beyond human recognition. I think what that phrase means in Isaiah.

Is that. That he is marred beyond recognition as someone human. So brutalized was his body. He is there for us.

[43 : 52] And he dies. In our place. As the one who dies. For sinners. He is speaking therefore tonight to you.

God is speaking therefore tonight to you. Of his love. For rebels. He is speaking in the language. Of all of humanity. In a language that all of us can understand. That says.

There really was a punishment taking place at the cross. A punishment really was being implemented and executed. Someone special. The son of David.

The heir of David. The king of the Jews. The word of God made flesh dwelling among us. The great I am.

[44 : 50] Of the Old Testament. That person. He goes to the cross. And God is speaking to us to say. Sin. Deserves.

What is about to happen. Sin deserves this punishment. It may be that we can say.

Well. There is a great injustice there. Because Jesus does not deserve that punishment. He was a righteous person. It is so terrible. It is a great. Act of. As some people have even called it.

An act of cosmic child abuse. To speak this way. God the father. Inflicting this on his son. How dreadful an image is that.

And yet we need to remember. That all of this. Is substitutionary. What draws us to that. Is. The reality of this cross.

[45 : 49] The reality is. This was not the cross of Jesus. The day before. The day before. When this piece of wood. Was prepared. To go up to Golgotha. It wasn't prepared. For Jesus of Nazareth.

That may be another thing. That Pilate is drawing attention to. This is not. Barabbas. Who goes to this cross. Jesus has taken.

Someone's place. And so a clear declaration. Needs to be made. This is not the person. Who was meant to die. Who is dying. But someone is substituted for him. It is Jesus of Nazareth.

Who dies here. Not Barabbas. The insurrectionist. And so when they take Jesus. Up to the top of the hill. And there they crucify him. He's crucified with two others.

Probably co-conspirators. With Barabbas. Who are crucified either side of him. On his left and his right hand side. And again. And again. This sign. It points us to.

[46 : 48] A tiny little bit of prophecy. Isaiah 53 verse 9. He made his grave with the wicked. Psalm 22. Probably the most important prophecy.

For this section of John's gospel. There's about four or five. Potential points. Where John is deliberately drawing us. To Psalm 22. Psalm 22. He's there. Crucified. Among.

Sinners. Among the wicked. What's happening. What's happening. Is what John was talking about. Right at the beginning. The word was made flesh.

And he came. And dwelt among us. To the point of his death. Among us.

He was surrounded by the mass of humanity. That there at the cross. Everyone is represented. The Romans.

[47 : 47] The Romans. Represented. The Roman civilized world. The Jewish religious world. The gravity of the sinners who are crucified. Either side of them. One of whom goes on to confess.

We deserve this. Although this man does not. All of humanity is present at this moment. And Jesus is there among us.

The word made flesh dwelling among us. And enduring the shame. And the derision. And the scorn. And the horror of Golgotha.

And God in all of this is saying. I did not spare my only son. This is what Paul tells us. Romans 8 verse 32. He who did not spare his only son.

But gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him. Graciously give us all things. This is where salvation is found.

[48 : 48] It's where salvation was purchased. It's where salvation is finalized. This is the blood signed testimony. Of the will of God. Of God's eternal provision for our salvation.

The Lamb's book of life. That was written before the foundation of the world. All of that stuff. It's found certain. And made certain. Here at the cross. Because there was a man called Jesus of Nazareth.

Who was the king of the Jews. Who went and died. For us. The sign.

Is significant. So too though. Is the seamless garment. I say this more briefly. The tunic that Jesus wore.

No doubt by this point. It's probably already. Along with his other clothes. Stained in blood. These blood stained garments. Are virtually worthless. And yet still.

[49 : 51] The Roman soldiers say. Ours. They share them out. They divide them into four parts. One for each member. Of the execution detail. But his tunic.

It's impossible to split it up this way. They can't tear it up. It's just one singular piece of cloth. There's maybe some significance in that. There's certainly a significant record.

That Jewish mothers. When their sons would leave home. They would prepare a single woven cloak. For them to wear. Maybe this is that cloak.

Precious to Mary. As well. Maybe she draws John's attention to it. Perhaps. Others have pointed to the high priest's tunic.

That priestly garment. And certainly there is a. A priestly activity taking place here. But I don't. Myself.

[50 : 48] I don't think the text draws our attention. To either of these things. Instead. John. Places significance on the tunic.

Because. Of the soldiers. So you go back to John 20. To Psalm 22 again. Verse 18. And they divided my garments among them. And for my clothing.

They cast lots. And the. The one simple implication here. Is that Jesus was stripped naked. And put on the cross. And left to die.

Surrounded by absolute indignity. And shame. But what we see though. Is an echo of John's writing elsewhere.

On Wednesday night. Roddy. Read this passage for us. He was talking about how Jesus. At one of the crucial points in John's gospel.

[51 : 47] Remember John 12. 13. Jesus. Comes with the disciples. To the upper room. And when they arrive in the upper room. Jesus. Strips off.

His outer garment. And the word that John uses there. For the outer garment. Is the same word that the soldiers. For the. The item of clothing. The soldiers are now gambling. And.

Because John is so. Precise with his language. Because John is so. Straightforward. In the use of language. There isn't. It's not a stretch. To say that John is giving us.

A pointer. Back to that passage. Where Jesus. Strips off his outer garment. And he takes on. The role of the humblest of servants. Washing.

The dust. And the animal excrement. The crap. Off the feet of the disciples. When they go into the upper room. And the humility.

[52 : 47] That that took. And yet the identity. Of the person. Who is exercising. That humility. Is none other than. The son of God. The divine I am.

The king of the Jews. And there he is. Washing the disciples feet. And taking care of them. In that setting. And it's not beyond.

Therefore the realm of possibility. And sensible. Exegesis. To say. John is pointing us back. To that identity. And reminding us. That the person now on the cross.

Is the same one. And is doing the same thing. That the one at the cross. Is here. Bearing. Sin. Humbly. That he's doing it. Taking. The lowest. Place. The place of a substitute.

[53 : 50] It harks back then. To the language. Of the Old Testament. To the Day of Atonement. When substitutionary lambs. Are chosen. Two jobs. Have to be done.

By the substitutionary lamb. But you can't do two jobs. Because one of them. Has been slain. And having your blood. Sprinkled on the altar. The other one. Has been led outside the camp. Taken far. Far away. So that your sin. Is symbolically. Taken out of sight. And away forever. And that's what Jesus is doing. And that's what John.

Is pointing us towards. This. Role. That Jesus. Takes upon himself. To be the substitutionary. Atoning. Sacrifice.

For us. The one who takes our sin. On himself. He empties himself. Paul says. This is the language. Paul uses. Himself.

[54 : 42] He emptied. Taking the form. Of a servant. And then following. That trajectory. All the way. To the cursed. Death. Of the cross. He assumes.

The lowest. Place. So that our sin. Can be dumped. Upon him. And our guilt. Can be borne. By him.

And we. Can be. Freed. And the soldiers. Gambled. For his cloak.
It would be wrong. For us. To focus. On the soldiers. Casual. Everyday. Act. Of brutality. And just.
Miss. What it tells us. About our savior.
He dies. For us. In an act. Of profound. Self. Humiliation. Because he is indeed.
[55 : 47] The king of the Jews. But he is there. Raised up. And suspended. Between heaven. And earth. For our. For our. Salvation.

The language. Matters. And the question. For us. Remains. What therefore. Do we make of this man?
What do we think. Of what he has done. For sinners like us. Do we think. Oh well that's nice. Do we think.
Well that's. Interesting. Or do you tonight. Stop. Pause. Halt. And merely marvel.
And wonder. At this display. Of grace. This display. Of the mercy. Of God. For sinners like us.
[56 : 47] Where he does it all. And takes our guilt away. We need to stop and reflect.

That God comes down among us. And dies in our place. There is one final little picture.
Here again. I think again. The language is significant. It takes us back. To an earlier chapter. Of John's. Writing. And it's the care.
That he has for his mother. There's a. Human element to this. A human level. That we. We shouldn't miss. It is that as he goes to the cross.
Who is on his mind. His mother. And that. Alone. Dispels. So many of the. Frankly.
[57 : 45] Absurd. Claims that are made about Jesus. That. Somehow. He was involved. As. Some of the apocryphal gospels.

Would suggest. That he was involved in a. An illicit. Sexual liaison. With Mary Magdalene. Or that he was somehow. Perhaps even. Gay. In some way.
And the person he. He thinks about. At the cross. And talks about. To his apostles. Is his mother. And he commits her.
Into the care. Of one of his closest friends. The thoughts of Jesus. At this moment. They don't betray. Some secret knowledge. About special secret identities.
Or. Secrets that are going on. In his private life. They tell us. What's ordinary about him. He was a man. Who cared about his mom. Yet.
[58 : 44] There's more going on here too. Because. Again. There's two things. That are a bit strange. One is simply.

The fact that Jesus. Had brothers and sisters. And so the question. Almost is. Well. Why doesn't he commit. His mother's care. To one of them. I mean. He's the oldest son. And he can pass.
The responsibility. For her to. His next eldest brother. Probably James. And say. James. You take care of mom now. I'm not going to be able to. Obviously. I've been putting a cross.
But it's not James. That he gives the responsibility to. It's his friend. John. So that's a little bit intriguing. And we need to think about that. But there's also the language.
That's used. And the language again. Because John is so. Precise with his language. Because he's so. Simplistic. And straightforward. With his language. That when he uses.
[59 : 40] A peculiar word. In a setting. We need to again think. Well. Where does that come from? And so when he addresses his mother. He says. Woman. Behold your son.

And if you've read John's gospel. You remember. There's a time previously. Where he said that word. His first miracle. Where he first. As John tells us. He first revealed his glory.
Back at the wedding in Canaan. And Mary comes to him. And says. They've run out of wine. What are we going to do? And she knows. Jesus can do something. And Jesus looks at her.
And says. Woman. What is this to do with me? My hour. Is not yet come. And the hour. Is clearly now come. It's at the cross.
And Mary is present. At the hour. And. And Jesus addresses her. The same. With the same title. Woman. It's an interesting word.
[60 : 38] In. In. In. In. Greek. And. Presumably. John's reflecting. Something of the Aramaic. That's been spoken. At the time. As well. In that the word. That he uses. Is one of.

Great reverence. It's not as dismissive. You know. If we were to speak. To somebody that way. If I was to speak. To my mother. And say. Woman. What are you doing? You would think. I'm being very dismissive of her. But that's not the way.

Jesus speaks. It's actually. A phrase of great. Affection. And respect. It's like that. The way. I often. The way.

I would kind of describe it. As the way. Folks from the southern states. In. In. In America. Would address women. They'd say. Mom. It's very respectful. And that's the same language.

That Jesus now uses. When he points to his mother. And John. He's. He's drawing us back. Then I think. With the use of that language. Like bookending the gospel. Just as in fact.

[61 : 36] The story of Mary. Bookends. The life of Jesus. Remember the magnificat. There at the beginning. And now Jesus. Taking care of her. At his death.

And giving responsibility. For her care. To John. It points us back. To the glory of Jesus. That John. Wanted us to see. And presumably. Jesus.

Wanted his disciples. To see. Back at the. Back at the wedding. In Canaan. Back at the wedding. At Canaan. Where Mary.

Expresses faith. Where Mary. Says. To the servants. Whatever he tells you to do. Do it. Even though Jesus. Has basically said. You can't tell me. To do this.

Mary says. Whatever he says. Do it. Because she trusted him. She believed. In him. The reason. Jesus commits her. Into John's care. Is the same. It's because of Mary's.

[62 : 32] Faith. You see. At this point. Jesus' brothers. And Mary's. Other children. Therefore.

They don't believe. John's already. Told us. In fact. His brothers. Scorned his. Ministry. They thought.

He was mad. They thought. He's off his head. And now. Jesus. Is about to die. As the substitute. The atoning sacrifice. And he wants his mother. To survive this. Not just.

At a personal level. But he cares about. Her faith. He doesn't want. To bruise. Her faith. And so. He makes.

[63 : 27] Her immediate care. The responsibility. Of one of the disciples. In fact. Probably the closest. Of his disciples.

Not merely. Because. He trusts. John. And knows. John will take care of her. And because. John's presumably. Able to take care of her. But because. John will be able.

Not only to take care of her. Practical needs. But John will very. Quickly. Be able to take care of her. Her spiritual need as well. He'll take care of her.

Faith. He will pastor her. He will minister to her. Spiritual need. And I find that really. Compelling.

That Jesus. When he dies. He doesn't want. He doesn't want. Mary's. Faith. To be undermined. He wants.

[64 : 25] Somebody to be near to her. To explain to her. Mary. Remember. This is why your son died. He wants someone. To remind her. Of the significance.

Of what happens here. He wants somebody. To speak to her. And into her grief. And into her sorrow. And to remind her. And say. He did this for you.

As John clearly does. Come to understand. Very quickly. In fact. What Jesus did. At his death. Was he was thinking.

About the faith. Of. His loved ones. And tonight. That includes. You and I. And so.

The implication of this. And the application of this. Is a simple one. Just to conclude on. Is that when we go into times. Of. Profound. Sorrow. When we face things.

[65 : 21] That are difficult. When we have to face. Hard. Bitter. Experiences. We should not forget.

That Jesus still loves us. And that Jesus still cares for us. That he loves you. That the king of the Jews.

Who humbly took our sin upon himself. Wants your faith. To be. Nourished. He wants your faith.

To be cared for. He wants your. Affection. For him. And your love for God. And your obedience. To God. And the exercise.

Of your faith. In your life. He wants your. Your priorities. To continue. To be shaped. By this. That you're.

[66 : 20] That you're loved. That God himself. Went to the cross. To experience. Death. For. You. And he did it.

Because he loves you. And he wants you. To thrive. He wants you. To flourish. He wants you.

To grow. That bruised reed. He is not going to break it. That tiny. Little. Ember. Of faith. When sometimes you feel.

Now the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with each one of you now and always. Amen. Amen.