

Saturday Evening Service - The Prevailing Voices

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Date: 30 November 2024

- [0 : 00] We're going to begin our worship this evening by singing to God's praise and singing in Psalm 95. Praise him and rejoice.
- We're going to sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise. We stand to sing. O come, let us joyfully sing to the Lord, to the rock of salvation.
- Let us raise our voice. Let us come before him, expressing our thanks.
- Let us with love singing, praise him and rejoice. The Lord is the great God, King over all gods.
- The earth's deepest places he holds in his hand. The heights of the mountains belong to the Lord.
- [1 : 42] The oceans are his hand, he formed the dry land. Come, let us bow humbly and worship the Lord.
- Let us kneel before him, our maker in prayer. For we are his people, and he is our God.
- He shepherds and feeds us in his loving care. Let us pray, if you hear, if you hear, if you hear, and attend to his voice, don't harden your hearts, as you did on the way.
- In heaven, in a steeper, you quarreled with me. You tested my patience at Mass that day.
- Your fathers provoked me and tested me there. Although they had witnessed the works I had done, With that generation for forty long years, My deep indignation continued to burn.
- [3 : 42] I said there are people whose hearts go astray, They do not acknowledge that my ways are best, And so in my anger I stated alone, I swear that they never shall enter my rest.
- Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Lord our gracious God as we come in your name this evening, We are thankful for the very privilege that it is ours to gather and worship you, To come and lift our voices joyfully to you in song, Acknowledging you as our rock, the rock of our salvation, And thankful Lord for all that you have done and are doing for us, And all that we look ahead to as well in anticipation that you will fulfill for us as well.
- We are thankful that you are the God who has given so many promises to us. We are thankful for the way that even this psalm reminds us of your goodness to your people, That you are one who leads them, who helps them along the way, Who helps your people through all different kinds of situations.
- We have sung of the way that you have led your people in the past, And thankful for the promise that you lead your people to this very day, And you lead your people going forward as well.
- And even in days when we are dismayed in the direction of our land, When we are dismayed by all that goes on around us in so many ways, We are thankful that we come to you as the living God, We come to you as the one who formed the deepest of places, And who holds all things in his hands.

[5 : 54] And we thank you that tonight, O Lord, in our weakness, We come to you as the one who is the strength to your people. You are the one who hears our prayers. You are the one who, even in a world that mocks the very fact, That we call to you as God and Lord, That you remind us in your word, And you remind us in so much of your providence towards us, That you will not be a God who is mocked, But that you indeed will hear and help according to your will.

And so we come in that dependence upon you and you this night, As we prepare our hearts, As we come to worship you this evening, And as we look forward, God willing, in anticipation, To sitting at the Lord's table tomorrow.

As we come, Lord, to remember, Above all what has been done for us through your Son, Jesus Christ, The one who was himself mocked, The one who was rejected and despised by many, The one who came to his own and his own did not receive him, The one who, as we will read of this evening, Was mocked among so many different people.

And yet, O Lord, in the midst of all that was cried out against him, He cried out with a greater voice, Father, forgive them, for they know not what we do.

And we thank you, Lord, that this evening as we come, That you are still a God who is merciful and gracious. And we do pray, Lord, that you will be merciful towards us, That in our preparation and in our looking to you at this time, That you will help us to come before you anew, Asking for forgiveness for all our sins, Asking that you will make us whole again before you, That you will cleanse us in the precious blood of Christ, And that we might know the power of your forgiveness, And that we might know the mercy and grace that you show to your people, Again and again.

[7 : 55] We pray that for ourselves here, As we pray it for all around us, Lord, That you would have mercy upon our land at this time. And we do thank you for your word that is an instruction to us.

It reminds us of the great joy in worshipping you, But it reminds us too of the warnings of rejecting you. With that great warning that we have sung of in this psalm, That you swore that they would never enter your rest.

And that is what you say to those who will reject you, Those who will turn away from you, That there will be no peace. But we thank you that for those who do confess your name, For those who put their trust in you, That you have prepared a place of peace, That you have prepared a place for your people.

And we do pray, Lord, that you will lead us and guide us in that way. To show us the paths everlasting, The paths of life divine, Where there is joy at your right hand.

And so, Lord, help us to praise you this evening. Help us to praise you in song, To praise you in your word, To praise you in our hearts, O Lord, That we would give thanks for all your goodness to us.

[9 : 07] And help us, Lord, just to look to Jesus, The author, the perfecter of our faith. We thank you for your church, for your people, For the great encouragement that there is as you build your church.

And we do pray that your church will be built here in our midst, That you will encourage us together, That you will strengthen us in these days, That you will help us to be a people who worship you in spirit and in truth, And who serve you with our whole hearts, Who honour you with all that we are and all that we have.

And that you would add to your number here, Lord, those being saved. As we hear the great encouragements in your word of the church in the days of the book of Acts, When they were together under your name, They were together in heart and unity and worship.

And that you are pleased to bless by adding to their number those who are being saved. That is our prayer for us to gather here even this evening, That those who have maybe not confessed or professed your name, That would be added to that number, Who would profess Christ as Lord, Lord of all.

And so we pray, Lord, that together here this evening, You would hear all our prayers collectively. And remember your church far and wide as well. As a church, your people pray for so many things going on in our world, As we especially think of our own nation in these last days, How we have seen the days that we live in the darkness of them.

[10 : 39] As we think of the Parliament's decision yesterday in supporting of assisted suicide, Lord, our hearts break in the midst of it. That we have come to such a point in our history, When we think that we can take control of matters of life and death, And not acknowledge that these belong to you.

We do pray, Lord, that your will would still be that our nation would turn from this. That we would see a rejection of it, Lord. That we would see a turning against it.

For we are so fearful of what it entails if it goes ahead to many in our land, Lord. When life is seen as in our own hands instead of in yours.

Lord, we pray, have mercy upon us. We pray too for the nations of the world around us, Where we see so much turmoil and chaos. Not just in our own land, but far and wide.

Our world, as it were, is crumbling around us in so many ways. The security and foundation of your word is lost. When we build our own kingdoms and we build our own towers, We know, Lord, that they will only be torn down.

[11 : 53] And so we pray, Lord, that your kingdom will come in power. That the darkness that we see around us will be overcome By the wonder of your light, the light of the gospel. That you would come in a day of your power.

Draw us to yourself again and revive us in these days. So, Lord, we pray that you will hear your people. That you would draw near to us and help us in all of these things.

Remember our loved ones in our community here in our church. Remember those who are unwell, whether that's at home or in hospital. We do commit each other into your hands, O Lord, That you will surround us by your grace and by your mercy.

Thankful for you as our shepherd, the Lord who is near. The one who helps us through all the different experiences in life. Whether it's joy or sorrow.

Whether it's times of building up or tearing down. Whether it's time of laughter or tears. We thank you that you are the one who gives us all experiences. And yet the one who is with us in them.

[12 : 56] So, Lord, bless us now. Continue with us. As we sing your praise and as we prepare our hearts. As we open up your word. That your word would minister to all our needs. And that you would come into our midst, O Lord.

And do us good as we ask all things for the forgiveness of our sins. In Jesus' name. Amen. We'll again sing to God's praise this time in the Scottish Psalter in Psalm 19.

Page 223. Psalm 19, page 223. We'll sing from the beginning of the Psalm down to verse 8.

The heavens God's glory do declare. The skies his hands works preach. Day utter speech. Today and night. Tonight doth knowledge teach. There is no speech nor tongue to which their voice doth not extend.

Their line is gone through all the earth. Their words to the world's end. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 8. To God's praise. Amen. The heavens God's glory do declare.

[14 : 07] The skies his hand works preach.

Day utter speech. Today and night. Today and night. Tonight doth knowledge teach.
Today and night.

Tonight doth knowledge teach. There is no speech nor tongue to which their voice doth not extend.

Their line is gone through all the earth. Their words to the world's end.

[illegible]

[15 : 45] And there is nothing from this heat that hidden doth remain.

God's law is perfect and converts the soul in sin that lies.

God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise.

The statutes of the Lord are right and to rejoice the heart.

The Lord's call and is pure and a light to the eyes in light.

[16:55] We can turn together to read God's word now in the Gospel of Luke in chapter 23.

Luke chapter 23. Luke chapter 23. We read from the beginning. We're going to read down to verse 25. Tonight and God willing tomorrow we're going to be looking at both this both chapters here chapter 23 and into chapter 24.

This evening we're going to be looking at the voices that we see prevailing as it's described here the voice of the crowd and the voice of Pilate in the midst of it but above all to hear the voice of the Lord.

So we're going to read from verse 1 chapter 23 down to verse 25. Then the whole company of them arose and brought him, that's Jesus, before Pilate.

And they began to accuse him saying, We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.

[18:08] And Pilate asked him, Are you the king of the Jews? And he answered him, You have said so. Then Pilate said to the chief priests in the crowds, I find no guilt in this man.

But they were urgent saying, He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea from Galilee, even to this place. When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean.

And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him.

So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him.

And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

[19 : 28] Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people and said to them, You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, Behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him.

Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. I will therefore punish and release him.

But they all cried out together, Away with this man and release to us Barabbas, a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection, started in the city and for murder.

Pilate addressed them once more, deciding to release Jesus. But they kept shouting, Crucify! Crucify him! A third time he said to them, Why? What evil has he done?

I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him. But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified, and their voices prevailed.

[20 : 45] So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked.

But he delivered Jesus over to their will." And so on. And may God add his blessing to that reading of his word. Before we turn back to look at this passage, we'll again sing to God's praise this time in Psalm 49.

In the Sing Psalms version, Psalm 49, page 64 of the psalm book. We're going to sing from verse 1 down to verse 10.

Psalm 49 at verse 1. Listen to me, all you people, all who are in the whole world dwell, low and high, both rich and needy, hear the message I will tell.

And then the psalmist goes on to describe the way that the cost of redeeming a life. There is no one who is able to redeem a soul from death. None can pay to God the ransom to prolong another's breath.

[21 : 53] To redeem a life is costly. None sufficient price can pay so that one should live immortal, free forever from decay.

A reminder to us here of the wonder of our Redeemer, who is Christ Jesus, and the one who paid the price for us. So we're going to sing from verse 1 to 10 to God's praise.

Psalm 49, verse 1. Psalm 49, verse 1. Psalm 49, verse 1. Psalm 49, verse 1. Listen to me, all you people, saw you in the whole world dwell, Though unto my hope rich and needy, hear the message I will tell.

I will speak with understanding, listen from the heart of grief.

I will listen to a problem, Secrets with the heart of grief.

[23 : 17] Why should I fear days on evil, when the wicked hand be in?

Those who boast of their possessions, by their trust in wealth they sin.

There is no one who is able to redeem a soul from death.

None can bid to God the ransom, To prove off another's bread.

To redeem a life is costly, than sufficient Christ can pay.

[24 : 28] So that one should live immortal, free forever from decay.

For we all can see life ending, Wise and foolish all will die.

They must give their wealth to others, None can death's demand defied.

We can turn back to our reading in Luke chapter 23. We read again at verse 22.

A third time he, this Pilate speaking, said to them, Why? What evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death.

[25 : 34] I will therefore punish and release him. But they were urgent, Demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed.

Their voices prevailed. Prevailed there means victorious. As if they're saying their voices were victorious in this situation that Jesus would be crucified.

But was it these voices that prevailed in this setting? If you had Jesus standing in front of you, what would you want to ask of him?

What would be the burning question in your heart that you would want to ask of him? On Thursday evening, I was invited to the explorers group, the older group of the explorers.

And they had been preparing questions to ask of me over the last number of weeks. They'd been studying through the early books of the Bible in Genesis and a few books after that.

[26 : 40] And so a lot of the questions were based on what they'd been looking at there. And there were some great questions that they'd come up with. Challenging questions. Questions that aren't always easy to answer.

Questions like, Why did sin come into the world? Why did God make the world? Why did God make the world and the people in the world? Why did God make the Bible?

Or where is the Garden of Eden? There's a lot of questions about the Garden of Eden. It's great to ask questions in that way because it makes us think, it makes us look into the Word of God and search into it and try and find answers to these questions.

And we may all have questions that we would love to bring to others. But imagine having the Lord Jesus in front of you and being able to ask a question of Him.

Well, as you read through this section in Luke 23, what you find is that Jesus is here appearing before many different people. And one of them is Pilate, who we read of here.

[27 : 46] Pilate was a Roman governor. He had a lot of authority, he had a lot of power. And that's why Jesus has been brought to him by the scribes and the Pharisees.

And as he is brought to him, he has this question that he asks of him in verse 3 of this chapter. Is this the most burning question that you would want to ask of Jesus?

Well, it was for Pilate in this situation. He asks of Jesus this question in verse 3. Are you the King of the Jews? Are you the King of the Jews?

And what this question is really asking is, who are you? Who are you, Jesus? How should we see you?

And as you read through the previous chapter as well, chapter 22 into chapter 23, what you are finding is Jesus before many different people.

[28 : 48] And he's been asked many different questions and they've come into their own opinions about them. There are many different voices speaking in this situation. But the question behind them all is really this.

Jesus, who are you? How do we see you? And in our own understanding of who Jesus is, that's what determines our faith, where our hope lies.

Who is Jesus to you this evening? That determines how you prepare yourself this evening. And that determines how you come, God willing, into this place tomorrow.

Whether you come to sit at the Lord's table or whether you may sit behind the Lord's table and look on. Is he your king?

Is he your Lord? Or do you look to another to rule over you? So many of the people here that we're reading of in this section, they did not want Jesus ruling over them.

[30 : 00] And Pilate is here in the midst of it with this question, Are you the king of the Jews? And because Pilate asks this question, because he sees Jesus as a threat to his authority.

In the same way as the scribes and the Pharisees in the previous chapter in verse 67 of chapter 22, If you are the Christ, tell us.

But he said to them, If I tell you, you will not believe. They saw Jesus as a threat, a threat to their authority.

The response of the crowd here in verse 16 of chapter 23, again is showing just how much they demanded that Jesus be crucified.

In verse 18, sorry they said, But they cried out all the more, Away with this man and release to us Barabbas, a threat to them and to their way of life.

[31 : 08] So who is Jesus to you tonight? Do you see him as a threat to your life? Or do you see him as the king and Lord of your life?

In the times of Jesus, as we read here, crowds gathering to protest was a common theme. You see it so often in Jesus' experience that the more he was teaching, the more miraculous signs that he was doing, the more opposition there was rising against him.

And again and again, these crowds were crying out against him in different ways. But this is where it comes to its culmination. This is where it all comes to a head.

And they are seeing here the threat of their way of life, the threat towards authority in their situation. And their protest is to silence this and to get him out of their lives.

And sadly, today we live in similar days as well. The people here wanted things going their own way. And so we see it in our own society today.

[32 : 13] We see many protests that rage against society, that rage against so many different things that are going on. But ultimately, in so many of them, it is a rage against God and against his law and who we will have as authority over us.

And Jesus has warned of this already in the Gospel of Luke. In chapter 19, in the beginning of that chapter, he speaks a parable. And that parable, ultimately behind it is, the people cry out in verse 14, we do not want this man to reign over us.

And that's what we see coming here as well, as we come to the trial of Jesus, as he appears before the council, before Pilate, before Herod, before the crowd. Who is it that is going to reign over us?

There are many voices clamouring for our attention, demanding a response. But the most important question is for us, is Jesus our King?

Is he our Lord? And so which voice prevails in all of this? We are going to look at three voices. Three voices that we see coming through here so clearly.

[33 : 32] And ask which one prevails for us. The first is the voice of Pilate. The second is the voice of the crowd. And then the third one is the voice of the Lord.

So the first thing we see here is the voice of Pilate. Jesus has been seen as a threat for some time. His signs and his miracles that he was performing and his great teaching, it was met with a mixed reaction.

So I marveled at what he was doing. But as we said, others saw it as a threat to the authority and power that the people had. And you would expect it maybe as you were seeing Jesus performing so many different miracles, teaching with his authority and teaching with his amazing teaching that he had of life, of eternity, of sin, of repentance, of all of these things.

That people would just come and fall before him and see him for who he is as Lord. But it wasn't so. Yes, there were some who acknowledged him in that way, but we see there were others who plotted against him.

And as you look through the life of Jesus, you find again and again these people were just looking for a way to get at Jesus. And perhaps as you go to the Gospel of John, you see a time when Jesus performed a miracle there with Lazarus in John chapter 11.

[35 : 05] And he said, Lazarus had died. And he came to Mary and Martha. And he wept when he saw their grief. But then he said, Lazarus, come out.

And Lazarus came out of the grave. And you would expect, surely, that people would see that here is one who has power and authority over all things, even death.

He had told them, I am the resurrection and the life. And many marveled. But it says in verse 53 of John 11, From that day on, they made plans to put him to death, to put Jesus to death.

Despite all that he was doing in their midst, they plotted, they planned to put Jesus to death. And this is a situation that we now meet with Pilate.

Their plan, their plot is now coming to fruition. Everything that they were looking towards now, it's coming to the point now where they've got him. They just need Pilate's help in the midst of it all.

[36 : 17] The scribes and the Pharisees, the Jewish council, they didn't have the power to put anyone to death. And so they accused Jesus, but they had to bring him to Pilate.

And so that's what we see between the end of chapter 22 and chapter 23. The council, the scribes of Pharisees, they said, bring him to Pilate.

Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. They were bringing him accused before Pilate and giving Pilate now all the evidence that this man should be put to death.

And what we see here is the voice of Pilate in the midst of all of this. The voice of Pilate. And what does it say?

Well, we see the voice of Pilate, probably three different things we could highlight. We see doubt, we see confusion, and we see fear. We see all of these things in Pilate.

[37 : 17] And so often they are things that we see in ourselves as well. It could be the experience we've had. It could be the experience that we're going through. Doubt is the first thing that we see.

Because Pilate has this question in verse 3, Are you the king of the Jews? He's looking for an answer. In the midst of his doubts, he's looking for an answer.

He's looking for something. And it's just like ourselves so often. We're asking questions of the Lord, because we have our doubts. Lord, show me something.

Give me a verse. Give me a sign, so that I can be sure of who you are. So that I can be certain and believe in you. And yet, time and time again, in Scripture we see people coming to ask for a sign.

You see it with Herod here in verse 8. He had longed to meet Jesus. It says in the middle of verse 8, he was hoping to see some sign done by him.

[38 : 25] He was hoping to see something, some miracle, some sign done by him. But instead, he mocked him. So even when signs were done, the people mocked.

And it's what we see so often in Scripture. Lord, just show us a sign. But Jesus has an answer to them. He said on one occasion in Matthew 12, An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

Jonah was in the belly of the great fish. And he said, So will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Do you need more?

Do you have doubts and do you need more? Or has not the word of God told you all that you need to know? Are you the king of the Jews?

The second thing we see of Pilate here is confusion. And again, we can have our own times of confusion.

[39 : 35] There's so much put before us, even in our day and age now, that we think, well, what do we believe? And Pilate himself was confused. We see it in verse 4 here.

I find no guilt in this man. Same in verse 14. Behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. There's this confusion in his midst.

I can't see in all the evidence that's before me. I can't see what you're seeing. I can't see anything wrong with this man. I find no guilt. He's got evidence before him, but he's not sure what to do with it.

And for ourselves, too. That can so often be the case. We've got the Bibles open before us, but we're confused. We don't know what to believe or how to believe it.

Because the world tells us we don't need this. We don't need to believe in this. But we do. And the voice of Pilate is one we hear so often.

[40 : 38] And it's a voice that we say, I'm just not sure. But the word of God is given that we might believe. That we might be sure. C.S. Lewis, in his book, A Grief Observed, he said this.

You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death. It is easy to say you believe a rope to be strong, as long as you're merely using it to cord a box.

But suppose you had to climb down a cliff. Wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it? To be sure in something is so much more important when it's a matter of life and death.

Well, do you realize the seriousness of what's before us in the word of God? It is matters of life and death. Where does your hope lie for life and death and eternity?

Are you confused in it all because it is before us here in the word of God? Jesus is the only one who is the way, the truth, and the life.

[41 : 51] There's nothing this world can offer us that will be our hope for all eternity except for him. If we are confused, the word of God speaks and pray that the Lord would guide you to know that certainty, to know that security that there is in Christ.

When Pilate asks the question here, are you the king of the Jews, what does Jesus say? In verse 3 it says, he answered him, you have said so.

It looks like he's putting it back onto Pilate himself. And the third thing that we see in Pilate's voice here is fear. But it's not of God, it's of man.

You see, Pilate here says Jesus was before Pilate. But ultimately, you can look at it the other way. Pilate was before Jesus.

Pilate had a decision to make. What would he do with Jesus? What was he going to do with this man who he could find no guilt with? The man who he wanted just to know, who are you?

[43 : 02] Are you the king of the Jews? Well, what becomes apparent is that as Pilate goes on, it is the crowd that becomes more important than Jesus.

He's more afraid of the crowd than he is of Jesus. The authority he might lose. His position that he might lose if he doesn't go with what they are saying.

They are crying out, release to us Barabbas and crucified Jesus. Take this man away. And who is he going to listen to? Well, the fear of the Lord is nothing for him compared to the fear of man.

And is that you this evening? What voice are you listening to in the midst of that? It's the fear of the Lord that is greater to you and the fear of man.

Are you afraid of what you might lose if you claim Jesus as king? Well, there's more to lose if you don't.

[44 : 12] Pilate's voice speaks to us tonight, but it's a weak voice. It's not a voice we want to listen to. It's a voice full of doubt, full of confusion, full of fear.

And it's not one we want to prevail. The second voice that we see here is the voice of the crowd. The voice of the crowd speaks so powerfully in many ways.

And it's utter rejection. First, they shout out, away with this man. It's utter rejection. Release to us Barabbas.

Who is Jesus to the crowd? He is no one. He is nothing to them. They just want rid of him. They want him gone. And this is exactly what Isaiah had said would take place.

Isaiah writing about more than 600 years before this. In Isaiah 53. So much of what we see tonight and tomorrow we can see also in Isaiah 53.

[45 : 17] In verse 3 of that chapter of Isaiah 53, it says, He was despised and rejected by men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not. Despised and rejected by men.

And so that was the crowd away with this man and released to us Barabbas. And the same in John 1 verse 11.

It reminded there of how Jesus came to his own and his people did not receive him. They wanted nothing to do with him. And so here we are seeing the fulfillment of Scripture.

We are seeing the mocking of Jesus. We are seeing the crowd shouting like a baying crowd. And it says their voices prevailed.

[46 : 23] Their voices prevailed. Crucify him. Crucify him. It's not just a rejection of Jesus here of saying, No, we don't want Jesus.

But we want rid of him. We want rid of him entirely. We want him condemned. Put to death. The most shameful death that there is.

This is what they want for him. And so they get their wish. Their voices prevailed. What we see in our society today is heading in the very same direction.

Where crowds are just baying for Jesus. Not just to be gone. But Jesus to be condemned. Jesus to be put away entirely. Not just to say no to Jesus and to God in our society.

But now we're coming to the point where we say, We'll take the place of God. We'll take matters into our own hands. And it seems as it were as if these voices prevail in our midst.

[47 : 38] That these voices are victorious. It says that they handed, he delivered Jesus over to their will. In verse 25 there, at the end there.

They delivered Jesus over. He delivered Jesus over to their will. But did he really? It wasn't their will. It was still God's will.

And we'll see more of that tomorrow, God willing. But God was still in control. God was still in charge in this situation. And even in what's happening there is they released Barabbas.

And took Jesus away to be condemned. What is it saying to us? J.C. Riles speaks very powerfully about this. He says, We observe in this passage the remarkable circumstances connected to the release of Barabbas.

We are told that Pilate released Barabbas, the man in prison for insurrection and murder. But he delivered Jesus over to them to do as they wished. The two people before him.

[48 : 44] And he released to them one of the two. The one was a sinner against God and man. A criminal stained with many crimes. The other was a holy and harmless and undefiled son of God in whom there was no fault at all.

And yet Pilate condemned the innocent prisoner and acquits the guilty. He orders Barabbas to be set free and delivers Jesus to be crucified.

Barabbas set free and Jesus to be crucified. And what is that saying to us? Even though that thought of their voices prevailed, this whole exchange was reminding us of the exchange that would take place in the cross.

Where Christ, the innocent Lamb of God, would go in the place of sinners such as we are. That he would be made sin who knew no sin.

That we might be made the righteousness of God in him. There was a powerful exchange. But it was more than the people's will being done. It was the will of God being done for the salvation of his people.

[49 : 59] They are rejecting him, but they don't realize even who it is that they are rejecting. Someone put it like this in Christ. And what we have in Christ and what the danger is that we are rejecting.

We have a love that can never be fathomed. A life that can never die. A righteousness that can never be tarnished. A peace that can never be understood. A rest that can never be disturbed.

A joy that can never be diminished. A hope that can never be disappointed. All of these things that we have in Christ, and yet they're saying no.

Crucify him. Crucify him. Crucify him. Release to us Barabbas. And their voice prevailed.

Is that the voice that you are listening to this evening? Is that the voice that you are following this evening? The voice of the crowd that says away with him.

[51 : 03] Crucify him. Crucify him. Crucify him. They prevailed here. But ultimately they're not victorious. Because we have a third voice here.

A voice that we are to listen to. A voice that we are to heed. And that is the voice of the Lord. The voice of Pilate was weak.

The voice of the crowd may have seemed to prevail. But the greater voice of all here is the voice of the Lord. And as we've read through these verses, you think to yourself, Well, the Lord has not said much.

And the only words recorded for us are in verse 3. You have said so. But it makes us stop and ask, Whose voice are we going to listen to?

What voice will we hear in the midst of all the voices crying out here? Which voice will prevail? Pilate who asked, Are you the king of the Jews?

[52 : 07] The crowd who said away with him, crucify him. Or Jesus who says, You have said so. He is showing that he has authority.

And it comes back to the question, Who is Jesus for you? Is he Lord? Is he king? He is either Lord of all, Or not Lord at all, as someone once put it.

And throughout Scripture, we have the voice of the Lord calling out for our response. Even tonight, the voice of the Lord calls to us all, Who is your Lord?

And where are you with him? When you go through Scripture, you can pick out moments when the voice of the Lord calls. Go back to Genesis, In chapter 3, When Adam and Eve had sinned against God, And the Lord came into the garden.

What does the voice of the Lord say there? He asks, Where are you? Where are you? And so the voice of the Lord speaks to us tonight.

[53 : 20] Where are you? Are you hiding from God? Are you fleeing from God? Are you coming to God? You go into Joshua, chapter 24.

And Joshua is there speaking to the people, People who are taking many different gods into their hearts. And the voice of the Lord challenges in the midst of that, Through Joshua, who says, But as for me and my house, We will serve the Lord.

And so the Lord puts, Joshua puts the word of the Lord before us tonight. Who do you serve? In John chapter 10, verse 3, The voice of the Lord calls there.

And what does it say? It says, The sheep hear his voice, And he calls his own sheep by name, And he leads them out. And so it asks of us, Who is it that you're following?

Are you following the voice of the Lord? He stands before you, And you need to answer. And who is he to you?

[54 : 31] Is the voice of the Lord prevailing in your life tonight? He is calling. He is calling. Where are you? He is calling.

Who do you serve? He is calling. Who will you follow? But whose voice are you listening to? Pilate asked, Are you the king of the Jews?

He didn't realize just what he was asking, Because this was no ordinary king. He is a different kind of king to what Pilate and the scribes and the Pharisees thought they were looking at, Thought they were putting on trial.

He is a king who came into the world to seek and to save the lost. He is the king who came not to conquer earthly kingdoms, but to conquer the power of sin and death.

He is a greater king than anything they had imagined. And yet their voices prevailed. Pilate put him away.

[55 : 33] The crowd said away with him, release to us, Barabbas, crucify him. And their voices prevailed. But no, it's the voice of the Lord.

It's the voice of the Lord that prevails in all of this. Because he came for his own. And he calls his own.

And as we think of preparing ourselves to come to the Lord's table, We ask ourselves, why should we listen to this voice?

Because he has done it for you. In the previous chapter, chapter 22, in verse 19 and 20, we see there the preparation of the Lord's supper.

And it says in verse 19, He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you.

[56 : 39] Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise, the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

It is the Lord's voice that prevailed. It is the voice, Lord, the voice of the Lord that we are to listen to.

Because everything that they were seeking to do against him here was to fulfill Scripture. That he might save his people from their sins.

This body is given for you. For you who will hear the voice of the Lord and follow him. And this cup is poured out for you.

For you who will listen to the voice of the King. Is he your King? Is it his voice that prevails in it all?

[57 : 47] Because the voice of Pilate is weak. And ultimately puts Jesus away. The voice of the crowd may be loud and strong and many ways prevail.

But it's still weak. Because it wasn't their will that was done. It was the will of God. And the voice of the Lord speaks through it all.

Saying this I have done for you. Will you come and remember him? Will you come and follow the voice of the Lord.

And do this in remembrance of him? Let us pray. Our Father in heaven we thank you that you speak to us as your people.

That you call us to yourself. That you remind us of the voices in this world that so often seem to have power and authority. And yet the voices that are weak.

[58 : 53] And the voices that will be silenced one day. But we thank you that the voice of the Lord is heard. And heard powerfully. And we ask you Lord that you will speak to us anew this evening.

And remind us of all that you have done for us. That you have prepared a table for your people. That you have given the body and poured out your blood.

All for your people. And that we might hear your voice calling to us to come. And do this in remembrance of you. So Lord go before us.

Guide us and help us. Strengthen us in our faith. And build us up together. As we ask all in Jesus precious name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 116.

Psalm 116 in the Scottish Psalter. Page 396. Psalm 116.

[59 : 59] We're going to sing from verse 4 to verse 7. Psalm 117. Psalm 117. Psalm 117. Psalm 117. We'll sing these three stanzas to God's praise.

We'll sing these three stanzas to God's praise. We'll sing these three stanzas to God's praise.

Amen. Amen. Psalm 117. Psalm 117. Psalm 117. Psalm 117. Psalm 117. Psalm 117. Psalm 118. Psalm 118. Psalm 118.

Psalm 118. Psalm 118. Psalm 118. Psalm 118. Psalm 118. Psalm 118. Psalm 118. Psalm 119.

We humbly pray.

[61 : 12] Mercy full and righteous is, Yea, gracious is our Lord.

God saves the meek I once got low. He did me help afford.

O thou, my soul, do thou return, Unto thy quiet place.

For thou, my soul, do thou, Lord, to thee is found in the express.

Amen. After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Rest upon and abide with you all, Now and forevermore.

[62 : 32] Amen. Amen. Amen.