

# Jesus' Trial

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Date: 29 March 2026

Preacher: Sam Lenton

[ 0 : 00 ] We believe. Our God, for service here, and He reigns with power and authority!

You are able to do all things. You are alive and at work in me.

We believe. Oh, we believe. Our God, also busy and He reigns with power and authority in heaven on earth.

His praise will be heard. Lift Him up, lift Him up, lift Him up. Our God, also busy and He reigns with power and authority in heaven on earth.

His praise will be heard. Lift Him up, lift Him up, lift Him up. Oh, lift Him up, He is worthy.

[ 1 : 44 ] Rise up, people of God. Rise up, sing of His love.

There's no other, there's no other, there's no greater than our God. Rise up, people of God.

Rise up, sing of His love. There's no other, people of God. Rise up, Rise up, sing of His love There's no other, there's no greater Lift Him up, lift Him up, lift Him up Our God also makes me And He reigns with power and authority In heaven on earth, His praise will be heard Lift Him up, lift Him up, lift Him up

Our God also makes me And He reigns with power and authority In heaven on earth, His praise will be heard Lift Him up, lift Him up Lift Him up In His love, in His hearts Let the King of my heart Be the mountain where I run The fountain I drink from Oh, He is my song Let the King of my heart Meet a shadow where I hide

The ransom for my life Oh, He is my song You are good, good Oh, You are good, good Oh, You are good, good Oh, you are good, good Lord.

[ 4 : 46 ] Let the King of my heart be the wind inside my sails. The anchor in the waves, though he is my song.

Let the King of my heart be the fire inside my face. The anchor of my days, though he is my song.

Oh, you are good, you're good. Oh, you are good, so good.

Oh, you are good, so good. Oh, you are good, good.

Oh. Oh, you're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down.

[ 5 : 47 ] Oh, you're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down. You're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down, Jesus.

You're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down. You're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down.

You're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down, Jesus. You're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down You're never gonna let, you're never gonna let me down You are good, you're good Oh, you are good, so good Oh, you are good, so good Oh, you are good, you're good Oh, your goodness never ends Oh, you are good, you are good

And your love endures You are good, you are good And your love endures You are good, you are good And your love endures today Lord, you are good You are good and your love endures You are good, you are good And your love endures You are good, you are good And your love endures today A love unlike the world has known A love that left no stone untouched

A love that fought for our forgiveness A love that breaks the gap between us A love that chases me down A love that waits for my return A love that shows me from the very start A love that heals the wounds from my past Oh, what can be more beautiful Than a life laid down for me And to this love I give my all Jesus take my everything The love that never keeps going

[ 9 : 30 ] The love where there is always more The love that wipes away my every tear The love that I've lost on my deepest fears Oh, what can be more beautiful Than a life laid down for me And to this love I give my all Jesus take my everything Take my everything You can have it all At the cross You poured our perfect love for us

You came to save That we might know you face to face At the cross You poured our perfect love for us You came to save That we might know you face to face So I will give my every breath My every moment And I will live for you Oh, what can be more beautiful Than a life laid down for me And to this love I give my all Jesus take my everything Oh, what can be more beautiful Than a life laid down for me

And to this love I give my all Jesus take my everything My life fades down for me My life fades down for me My life fades fades fades fades fades Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 14 : 04 ] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. God, we do pray that as we walk through this week together, God, I pray that again you will remind us of your sacrifice.

You will remind us of your grace. You will remind us of your love and hope. God, I pray that you will be in the midst of all that we say and all that we do this morning.

Amen. Father, let our praises point to you. Let our praises celebrate you this morning, I pray.

Hosanna to the King of Kings.

Amen. Let's stand and let's worship together. Let's worship together. Let's worship together. Let's worship together. Let's worship together. Let's worship together. Let's worship together. Let's worship together. Let's worship together.

[ 15 : 32 ] Let's worship together. My love is done.

What's all you need for you We long for you When we see you We find strength to face the day In your presence All our fears are washed away Washed away Hosanna Hosanna You are the Lord who saves us Worthy of all our praises Hosanna

Hosanna Come on your way among us We welcome you here Lord Jesus Hear the sound of hearts returning to you We turn to you In your kingdom Broken lives are with you You make us new Cause when we see you We find strength to face the day In your presence All our fears All our fears are washed away Washed away

Washed away Hosanna Hosanna Hosanna You are the Lord who saves us Worthy of all our praises Hosanna Hosanna Hosanna Come have your way among us We welcome you here Lord Jesus Hosanna Hosanna Hosanna Hosanna Hosanna Hosanna Father, again, we come before you in thankfulness.

And God, I pray that as we continue to worship you, God, as we continue to focus our lives and our hearts on you, Father, you will remind us of who you are.

[ 19 : 12 ] Father, we see the King of glory. And God, we pray that as we worship you, God, that you will show and reveal yourself afresh to us, we pray in your name.

Amen. Let's continue to worship with the song, I See the King of Glory. Hosanna. Hosanna.

I see the King of glory Coming on the clouds with fire The whole earth changed The whole earth changed I see His love and mercy Washing over all our sin The people sing, the people sing Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna in the higher Hosanna, Hosanna

Hosanna in the highest I see a generation Rising up to take their place With selfless faith With selfless faith I see a new revival Stirring as we pray and sing We're on our knees We're on our knees Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna in the highest

Feel my heart and make it clean Open up my eyes to the things unseen Show me how to love like You Have loved me Break my heart for my grace, Lord Everything I am for Your kingdom's cause As I walk from earth From earth to eternity Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna in the highest

[ 22 : 45 ] Hosanna, Hosanna Hosanna in the highest Hosanna in the highest Hosanna in the highest Thank you, please take a seat It's the point of our service when we give thanks for our offerings We encourage our regular attenders to contribute to the life of the church through our financial giving As part of what God requires of us And we have that opportunity to do that online We have that opportunity to do that here this morning Should you wish as well through our card reader And also there's a box as well just over to the side here

Let's give thanks for the offerings And pray that God will do with them as He lives God, we are so thankful again for the offerings of Your people And God, we pray that as collectively we use the gifts that we receive here God, we do pray that we use them to build Your kingdom And to continue to

extend Your kingdom in this community God, we're so thankful for the many aspects And the many different things that happen week by week And day by day And God, we do pray that this giving goes towards and supports so much of that mission That You have called us to in this community In Your name we pray Amen As we mentioned a little bit earlier This is the beginning of our Easter Our Holy Week As often people refer to it as as well Palm Sunday And a little bit later on in the week We have our Maundy service on Thursday at 8pm

So please do join us for that And then on Good Friday We've got an hour before the cross in the afternoon Kicking off at 2.45 for that hour to come And have that time to reflect together And then Easter Sunday We have our Easter Sunday celebration Again, a great opportunity to invite people along to that service We're also looking forward to a couple of baptisms that morning as well Which we're very excited about as well And I get to have my kind of monthly bath Which is wonderful And we've got a great opportunity to again celebrate lives And give thanks for those who will be having baptism So please continue to pray for them There'll be one from our Romanian congregation And also Gina from here as well In this congregation So we're looking forward to that And then Easter Sunday evening There will also be another service at 6.30 So I commend those to you Again, we've got camps coming up

Which we've mentioned the last few weeks But we still require a few volunteers for those So over early May bank holiday weekend We've got our United weekend We've got currently 13 young people signed up to be a part of that So again, we're looking forward to spending that time with them But we also need a few additional volunteers This year we've got our youth leaders Which are going to be there But we're trying to encourage our youth leaders this year To youth lead And have additional volunteers To come and do some of those additional jobs And support jobs over the course of the weekend So if you are free And you've got an hour or so to spare Then we've got a number of different jobs That are needed over the course of that weekend And all the churches involved Are putting volunteers forward for that So particularly lunchtime on Saturday Our church is responsible for making sure people are fed So we need three or four people to help with the serving And the packing down, etc And also we need a few additional people

To kind of help with things like Looking after the merch stand And looking after possibly security And the sign-ups and the registration area as well So if you are able to help for an hour or so Or any stage over that weekend Please let me know And then finally, just a reminder as well Our WEC camp, which is coming up Which is our summer camp The early bird for that Is on the 31st of March That concludes So if you want to get in at I think it's around about £60 cheaper Or something like that Then that is your chance to do that Before the 31st And also if you've got any young people Who are keen to get along to that Again, sign them up Or let me know And we'll get them signed up for you So yeah, let's pray for our children And young people now As they leave They're going to go into their various activities Again, if you've not signed up your kids At the desk As you came in [ 27 : 51 ] Make sure you do so Before they enter into those particular activities Let's pray for them Before they leave Father, we're thankful again For our young people And our children And Father, we pray for the leaders We pray for them As they walk alongside And they input But we pray that you will speak through them And Father, we do pray That what they learn again this morning Will build even more foundation As they become those lifelong disciples of you So Father, be with them Bless their time together I pray In your name We pray Amen Okay kids And young people Your time is now Ready to head through And just while they are heading off I'd like you to turn to people around you And say hi Greet them And say hello Thank you

Thank you I can calm them down first If you want I'll leave Hello everybody Good morning My name is Sheena And I am the Deacon for Community Ministry And today we're going to have Another in our series of This Time Tomorrow When we hear from somebody Within our congregation About what they do In their weekday lives Now most of us Spend a significant part of our lives In some form of work Or voluntary work As a carer Or paid work Or as a student So there's all sorts of ways That we work Through most of our lives And I think If we're really honest That most of us Have a really hard time believing That our work Day in and day out Is important to God Or has any lasting significance But the Bible is clear Your work forms part of God's purposes In time and eternity That's quite a thought God values our work And not only that He has put each of us Where we are For a reason To work his purposes out Through us Ephesians 2.10 says For we are God's handiwork Created in Christ Jesus To do good works Which God prepared In advance For us to do So one of the lovely things About this time tomorrow Is that we get to know People who are sitting

Around about us And today we're going to hear From Luke So some of you Will have seen Luke On the tech desk But most of you Will have no idea What he does During the week So Luke Before I ask you Some questions Could you tell us A little bit about yourself Hey Yeah So as Shina just said My name's Luke Hey to anyone Who doesn't know me yet So I came to Wickham In general And Union Baptist Church About five years ago Maybe three years Four years Worshipping and serving here So I kind of picked This church Because I knew The Morrises Before I'd met Ben Morris To be precise At uni And thought Well he's a normal Human being Not a complete psychopath I'll try the church That he had in Wickham So I moved up here For work I work in the TV And film industry Doing sound Which is why You sometimes see me Behind the sound desk Kind of makes sense Yeah And I really like it here I love it

In my spare time When I'm not doing film I do a bit of gardening I'm growing mint And rosemary At the moment If anyone needs Any of that Because I've got masses Right I'll go for that Yeah Okay so where will you be This time tomorrow So I've actually Just finished a job So with a bit of luck This time tomorrow I'll be in bed But usually On a standard work day I'd have gotten in at eight So by this time I'd have hoped to have Either have mic'd The actors and actresses Or be putting on radio mics On the actors and actresses And maybe If we've got a big scene With lots of stuff moving about I'll be putting down carpets Under people's feet And making sure We're taking out All those footsteps Or swinging a mic Above people's head On a pole Okay so you've talked In general about What you do What kind of things Do you work on So recently I spent most of my last year Working on Call the Midwife Which I know Some people love It's the one that people Get most excited for I got nominated For an Oscar For one job

[ 33 : 12 ] People still want to hear About Call the Midwife The most Or my last job That I did Completely different Gangster Nonsense Guy Ritchie stuff Right Gosh So you've told us A bit about What you'll be doing there So who are the kind Of people that you would meet So I mean I get a lot of time Interacting with Obviously the actors And actresses Putting the mics on them So the last job Had Pierce Brosnan on it Helen Mirren Lovely people But also you know Meeting the rest of the crew Which is really fascinating Actually Because you end up With people from All sorts of life Walks of life You know Whether that be People in the sparks department Or construction departments Which are very traditional Kind of Trades You know They're tradies In many ways Shapes or form Or you end up With the people Like myself You know In the sound department Or camera department Or Who are You know Technicians First and foremost I mean It's an art It's an art and science Meet But like And also like

People who Maybe in the art department Or the props department Who are Creative People who build stuff With their hands And you know Make props Or whatever And it's fascinating I love all of it I mean I get to Play pretend for a living It's great So what are the joys And what You've told us Some of the joys What are the challenges So I think Some of the challenges Are First and foremost I work in a Freelance field Right And I think There are two things That come with that You know There's always that Financial insecurity Especially in the first part Of the year When stuff is filming less It's like Where's my next job Going to be What's going to put Food on the table And money and things So I can pay rent So there's always that But there's also I think there's a risk With that Of like When you're You know 90% of your time Well not 90% of the time Hopefully 90% Is not how I'm spent working But maybe 20-30% of my time Is spent looking For the next job It's very easy To define yourself By your job And be like Well I'm a film technician First and foremost And a person second

Or a Christian second Or whatever You know And I think that's A challenge And also just You know On a more practical level Yeah you've got the hours You know It's a 10-12 hour day A standard Which is fine Again I love it But like It's very tiring And by the end of the job I don't think I'm the best person To be around Like On month six Of a six month job You know So That's a lot of challenges In there So what would you like Prayer for So One of the prayers I would really like Is As I just mentioned Like being able to See myself as a child of God As someone who Is loved And all that kind of stuff Outside of my work You know Having the You know Ability to Not ability But Yeah More space To reflect on Like actually You know Yeah I work in film and TV It's cool I love it But There are There's All this other stuff as well And Just time to reflect on that

And also Just As I said I'm out of work at the moment And it's very Sometimes very difficult To keep yourself entertained And sane During that time A lot of my friends Have very normal Human jobs Where they're not You know At work for a week And half time And Wednesday And a You know 12

o'clock You know So prayer and that Kind of thing as well Would be great Just those kind of areas Okay Let's just pray for Luke then Father God We thank you For bringing Luke To our church We thank you For the amazing work That he does And for the responsibilities That it has We also pray For all the uncertainties Of it The nature of it Being freelance And gaps Where there isn't work And not necessarily Seeing where it's Coming from next We pray you'll give him Peace in those times May he know that you Have your hand on his life As I said earlier That God has placed him In this place For a reason And we pray for his Work life balance If I can put it like that That he can find A time to be able To reflect on who He is in you And to be able to Just understand That he's loved by you And that he has You have a purpose For him Beyond just his work And we just pray That you can bring that Into his life More and more But we thank you For Luke For his enthusiasm His energy And we pray you'll Continue to bless him Every day And give him your peace In Jesus name Amen Thank you Thanks Sheena Thanks Luke Exciting to hear People are up to Day by day And again We encourage you In our times When we do Have those opportunities To connect And to grow together To find out That little bit more About what we do This time Tomorrow So let's continue As his people To worship him In our next song Lights of the World Let's stand And sing together Right over the world

[ 38 : 38 ] Is there Down into darkness Open my eyes And let me see Beauty that way In his heart Adore you Hope of what I've spent With you So here I am To worship Here I am To bow down Here I am To say that You're my God You're altogether Loving Altogether worthy Altogether wonderful Wonderful to me In the whole day

So so highly exalted Glorious in heaven above Come You came To the earth You created All for your safety Came home So here I am To worship Here I am To bow down Here I am To say that You're my God You're altogether lovely Altogether worthy Altogether wonderful To me I'll never know How much it cost

To see my sin Upon the cross I'll never know How much it cost To see my sin Upon the cross Upon the cross So here I am To worship Here I am To worship Here I am To bow down Here I am To say that You're my God You're altogether lovely Altogether worthy Altogether worthy Altogether worthy Altogether wonderful To me To me So the

Today's reading Today's reading Is John 18 Starting at verse 28 And running to verse 40 And that is on page 1086 Of the Bibles in front of you Jesus before Pilate Then the Jews led Jesus From Caiaphas To the palace Of the Roman governor By now it was early morning And to avoid ceremonial Uncleaness The Jews did not enter the palace They wanted to be able To eat the Passover So Pilate came out to them And asked What charges are you bringing Against this man? If he were not a criminal They replied We would not have Handed him over to you Pilate said Take him yourselves And judge him By your own law But we have no right To execute anyone The Jews objected This happened So that the words Jesus had spoken Indicating the kind of death He was going to die Would be fulfilled Pilate then went back Inside the palace Summoned Jesus And asked him Are you the king of the Jews?

[ 43 : 34 ] Is that your own idea? Jesus asked Or did others talk to you About me? Am I a Jew? Pilate replied It was your people And your chief priests Who handed you over to me What is it you have done?

Jesus said My kingdom My kingdom Is not of this world If it were My servants would fight To prevent my arrest By the Jews But now my kingdom Is from another place You are a king then Said Pilate Jesus answered You are right In saying I am a king In fact For this reason I was born And for this I came into the world To testify to the truth Everyone on the side of truth Listens to me What is truth?

Pilate asked With this He went out Against the Jews And said I find no basis For a charge against him But it is your custom For me to release to you One prisoner At the time of the Passover Do you want me to release The king of the Jews?

They shouted back No, no, not him Give us Barabbas Now Barabbas Had taken part In the rebellion Everybody My name is Sam And I am one of the elders here It is lovely to be with you This morning On Palm Sunday Just moving some of those around Okay In one of the most famous scenes From the first Star Wars film A New Hope Our heroes are trapped Within a garbage masher That is more commonly referred to As a trash compactor And it looks like the end is nigh The walls are closing in Quite literally And any moment now The good guys will lose And the dark side Will reign

Now when you watch the film For the first time This moment is genuinely gripping Because you don't know for certain That everything will be okay Of course it does seem unlikely That the heroes will all be wiped out So early in the film But the tension builds With every passing second And you can't quite rest easy Until C-3PO And R2-D2 Find a way to shut down The mechanism And save the day If you re-watch the film however You enjoy the drama But you don't quite feel the fear In the same way Instead you find yourself Trying to remember The exact moment When salvation comes Anticipating it And relishing the way In which good Ultimately triumphs Over evil You know they'll escape And you know That victory will come Good will reign And the dark side Will be conquered Well Until the Empire

[ 46 : 39 ] Decides to strike back In the sequel At least When the clock ticks The calendar turns And we find ourselves At Easter again It can sometimes feel Like we're watching Star Wars all over again Ah The Easter story I know this one It all looks bad For a moment But then it works out Okay in the end Right I can't wait to get To Easter Sunday And have that big celebration That Jesus is alive What are we doing Spending time looking At Jesus being on trial Before Pilate We could just rush through And enjoy the happy bits Why look at the darkest hour When the dawn Shines so brightly Well as those who sit On the other side Of the resurrection Armed with explanations From the gospel And letter writers That help us see The glory of that first Easter We know that the wrongs We witnessed In today's passage Were made right But imagine Not knowing that Imagine not knowing

The outcome Of Jesus' trial Not knowing What his death Was accomplishing Not knowing That he would Rise again As we revisit This passage This morning Let us slow down And feel afresh The horror Of humanity's Darkest hour Let us experience The injustice Of Jesus' trial And marvel And marvel anew At the earth Shattering Logic defying Love Of our Lord Who died For those Who put him To death In this passage We are presented With four Very different Individuals Or groups All of whom Play a key role In Jesus' trial And subsequent Crucifixion We have The Jewish Leaders The Roman Leaders The Jews Who gathered To watch The trial And a Jewish Criminal Barabbas Each character

In this story Promotes And protects Their own Preferences Be they political Religious Or personal At the expense Of the truth With a collection Of characters Who have either Been opposed To Jesus For some time Or for whom His presence Threatens their own Security and liberty It is perhaps Not overly surprising That they act As they do However Right before This passage Sandwiching The high priest's Questioning of Jesus We witness Peter Failing to be A faithful Witness To Jesus Peter The man Who had Declared That Jesus Was the Messiah And had heard Him teach And seen him Perform miracle After miracle Denies his identity As a follower Of Jesus Putting his own Safety Above the truth I think the Sequencing Of John's Narrative Of events Is particularly Powerful here In highlighting

Humanity's Abandonment Of God Earlier In the chapter Judas Betrays His Lord With a kiss Peter Denies Three times That he even Knows Jesus And then As we come To the trial The Jews And the Romans Abuse And reject The one They mockingly Call The king Of the Jews As we sit On comfortable Chairs Two thousand Years later It is tempting To pour scorn On these people Shaking our heads In disbelief That they could Have acted As they did But may I suggest We embrace A degree of Discomfort This morning As we observe The unfolding Drama Can we honestly Say that we Would not have Done as they Did That we Have not In fact Denied him Time and time Again In our thoughts And words And deeds As we look

Ahead to the Wonder of the Cross Let us remember That it was For us That he died That it was Our sin That held Him there We weren't There in person But we have Played those Parts And we share In the sorrow And the shame Of humanity's Darkest Hour But Praise God That by his Grace We can share In his victory And walk In his light Our passage Starting at Verse 28 Begins With a walk From one Earthly Authority To another As the Jewish leaders Take Jesus From Caiaphas The high priest To the palace Of the Roman Governor Pilate Having received A religious Judgment Jesus is then Subject To a Political Judgment There is a Fascinating detail In these verses That emphasizes Just how unusual

[ 51 : 44 ] The connection Between these Two people Groups Is As John Informs us That the Jewish leaders Sought to Avoid Ceremonial Uncleaness By not Entering the Palace So that they Could eat The Passover While entering A gentile Courtyard!

Open to the Sky Was acceptable According to Jewish customs They would Become Unceremonially Unclean If they Entered a Gentile Building Or home With a Roof On it This seems Like an Unusual Point For John To highlight Given the Gravity Of what Is about To unfold But I Think it Cleverly Draws Our Attention To a Few Important Points As we See In Matthew 23 Or Luke 11 Jesus Criticizes The hypocrisy Of the Teachers Of the Law Who Set Great Importance On External Actions While Being Full Of Greed And Wickedness On the Inside Here In John 18 We see Again A show Of Religiosity Following Rules To preserve Cleanliness On the Outside At the Very Moment That They're Seeking To Put To Death The One Who Has Come To Fulfill The Law While They Think They Are Avoiding Becoming Ceremonially Unclean Their Hearts Are Brimming Over With Wickedness Rejecting The Very God They Claim To Be Serving Through Their Rules And Secondly By Bringing Jesus To Pilate They Are Acknowledging That They Are Overreaching The Bounds Of Their Own Laws Look At Verses 30 To 31 Following Their Evasive Answer Of Well If He Were Not A Criminal Who Would Not Have Handed Him Over To You Which Perhaps Shows Their Recognition That The Charges They Are Bringing Against! Jesus Perhaps Aren't Enough To Warrant The Outcome They Desire Pilate Instructs Them To Take Him Yourself And Judge Him By Your Own Law These Great Law Keepers Who Will Not Even Step Into A Gentile Building With A Roof Are Presented With What Seems Like A Perfectly Reasonable Challenge Judge Him According To Your Own Law And By Extension Tensions Before The Trial Has Even Taken Place But We Have No Right To Execute Anyone They Objected It's Quite An Objection To Make Isn't It The Jewish Leaders Have Dragged Themselves In Front Of Their Roman Occupiers To Say Something They Probably Never Thought They Would Say We Need You Only The Romans Could Execute A Man By Crucifixion And In Doing So Bring The Curse Of God Upon The Man Who Hung On A Cross According To The Mosaic Law As Outlined In Deuteronomy 21 Verse 23 Of Course While They May Have Sought Such A Death For Jesus To Bring The Curse Of God Upon Him For His Supposed Blasphemy As Verse 32 Of Our Passage Tells Us In Insisting Upon Crucifixion This Fulfilled Exactly What Jesus Had Said About The Kind Of Death He Was Going To Die While They Thought They Were Thwarting Him And Bringing Him The Punishment He Deserved For For three enormous questions. Are you the king of the Jews? What have you done? And what is truth?

[ 55 : 55 ] Let's take each of those in turn. Firstly, are you the king of the Jews? I wonder how he delivered this line. Are you the king? Are you the king? Are you the king? Are you the king? I think all of these are possible, but I find myself particularly drawn to a focus on you or king. Pilate had seen wild revolutionaries who claimed to be kings, but Jesus didn't stack up to this image. He didn't look like a revolutionary or a criminal who was foolish enough to challenge Roman rule. As one writer puts it, Pilate had expected to meet a sullen or belligerent rebel and met instead the calm majesty of confident superiority. He could not reconcile the character of the prisoner with the charge brought against him.

Pilate's question shows that his first concern was his own position of power. Was Jesus a threat to him politically? Was he a rebel leader that he would need to subdue? Well, we can perhaps find ourselves asking similar questions. Is Jesus threatening my role as king of my own life? Is Jesus challenging my own authority and suggesting that I need to submit to him? We may well be happy to accept Jesus as a good teacher and a miraculous healer, but king? Well, if he's king, that demands something of us.

It is here that we come to Pilate's second question. What have you done? This question could have elicited two very different responses from Jesus. Option number one, which I think many of us would probably have gone for, would have been to lash out at his accusers saying he'd done nothing at all, nothing.

This was a show trial, a complete injustice that needed to be stopped immediately. Option number two, which could easily have followed hot on the heels of option number one, would have been to defend his record with a full-on, do you realize all the good things that I have done? Outburst, listing achievement after achievement that made it clear once and for all that this trial was an outrage. Just think of what Jesus could have said if it had gone for this option. The miracles, the teaching, the service, a life without sin that brought the love of God to a broken world.

[ 58 : 35 ] What had Jesus done? Where do we start? No one else had lived a life like this. However, despite two very good options being on the table, Jesus chose option number three.

He told Pilate who he was. Here are his words. My kingdom is not of this world. He plainly tells Pilate that he is a king, but his kingdom is not a rival political kingdom. His kingdom was not of this world. It was and is over the world. He is not just a king. He is the king of kings. What had he done? He had been king of kings. And why had he been born into the world? Verse 37. The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Identity, purpose, truth. What have you done? Pilate asks. This is who I am. Jesus responds. But what about truth? What is truth? Pilate's third question hits particularly hard in our supposedly post-truth culture today. When I hear this question, I always think of the title of an album by the Welsh rock band Manic Street Preachers from 1998. Some of you may remember it. This is my truth. Tell me yours. The title beautifully summed up the post-modern mindset of the late 20th century, suggesting that truth was no longer an objective reality, but rather a subjective perspective. I've got my truth. You've got your truth. And that's just fine. Let's not muddy the waters and suggest there is an absolute truth out there. What is Pilate really asking the question he seems to be asking? As with his first question, it can be tempting to consider his tone of voice, to picture him adopting a philosophical pose as he ponders life. But I suspect we're being far too kind to him if we do this. I think it is much more likely that his question is delivered in quite a cynical, dismissive tone, not too dissimilar from the attitude we can see in society today.

[ 61 : 07 ] Interestingly, it is the only one of the three questions that Jesus does not answer, which suggests that either Pilate was not genuinely seeking an answer, or that Jesus's previous assertion of his identity, purpose, and truth was the answer. What is truth? It is a good question, if asked with sincerity and a genuine desire to discover the answer. Four chapters earlier, in John 14, verse 6, Jesus proclaims, I am the way and the truth and the life. What is truth?

Jesus is. Rather than what, the question should be who? Who is truth? Jesus. And yet, while Jesus proclaims that the truth will set you free, at his trial, the world is turned upside down.

As the truth is crucified, as the truth is crucified and the criminal is set free. Barabbas. If anyone knew what it meant that Jesus died in his place, it was Barabbas.

He was a terrorist and a murderer, yet he was set free while Jesus was crucified. The man in whom Pilate found no fault was found no fault, no basis for a charge. The cross that Jesus hung upon was probably originally intended for Barabbas, yet he is unexpectedly set free and Jesus is substituted into his place, taking the punishment for his sin. And do you know what the name Barabbas means?

Son of the Father. Let's take a moment to breathe that in. Son of the Father. A criminal called Son of the Father is set free while the Son of the Father, the Son of God the Father, is crucified.

[ 63 : 24 ] The cry from the crowd of not this man but Barabbas sends a chill down the spine. Jesus is rejected and the criminal is chosen. The people welcome the criminal and condemn the Son of God.

Situation is completely corrupt and it highlights exactly why Jesus needs to die. The sinful people say, not Jesus but. And we can fill in the gap with so many things. Every day this choice is made, not Jesus but. This desire, that priority, my life first. When Jesus dies on the cross, he says, not you, not you, as it should be, but me. I will take on your punishment. I will receive the rejection. I will pay the price so that you can go free. We reflected at the start on how it might feel to not know what happens beyond the trial. To not know that the wrongs would be made right. This Easter, as at every Easter, there will be many for whom that is exactly their experience.

Many have not looked beyond the trial. They are suspicious of who Jesus claimed to be, unsure whether he really did do the things he has said to have done. They haven't seen that he died for them. They haven't believed that he rose to life again. They remain in humanity's darkest hour.

They need the light of Jesus. Well, if the they I am speaking of is you, may I urge you to experience the rest of the story. Journey with those who were plunged into darkness over that first Easter weekend and discover the risen savior yourself. Ask yourself the question that Pilate asked.

What is truth? And pray that you will be shown the answer. Come and meet the answer on Easter Sunday. For those of us who have seen this story before, like an avid Star Wars fan racking up their 19th viewing of A New Hope, how are we going to experience it this year? It is all too easy for Easter to feel like an old hope. Something overly familiar that no longer moves us as it once did. Let us see it afresh as a new hope. A renewed hope. A hope that we don't want to keep to ourselves. Like cinema goers rushing to tell their friends, you simply have to see the new Star Wars film. Will we eagerly pass on the story this Easter, urging our friends and family to encounter the risen

Christ? And when the world asks, what is truth? Will we proclaim that Jesus is truth? That he is the truth, the way, and the life? Amen.

[ 66 : 58 ] Thanks so much, Sam. Let's just pause for a moment. Let's just close our eyes and reflect just for a moment and sit in that story afresh. Sit in the familiar.

Sit in what we've read time and time again. Father, as we come again before you in the familiar story that is this Easter week.

Father, I pray again you will speak into our hearts. Father, you will reveal to us and open our ears and hearts and lives to the reality of who you are.

Father, let us not just dive through this week at high speed, waiting to just get to Sunday. Father, help us to sit in the story this week.

Help us to know that reality of your truth. Father, we are so thankful for your love, your sacrifice.

[ 68 : 38 ] God, I pray that as we're reminded that you are the way, the truth, and the life.

Father, we again can sit in that hope that only you can bring to each and every one of us. When we're desperately trying to find the way, when we're desperately trying to find our identity, when we're desperately trying to find out the next path to take.

Father, we can sit in that hope and that knowledge that you are that way, that you are that truth, and that you give life and our lives meaning because you are life.

Continue to speak to us, I pray in your name. Amen. We're going to continue worshipping together with the words, King of Kings, Majesty.

Let's stand and let's sing together before Sarah brings our prayers. Thank you. King of Kings, Majesty.

[ 70 : 09 ] God of Heaven, living in me. Gentle Savior, closest friend.

Stoke today, holy, cleaning I met. Oh, and with me, all such good love.

No heart to see. I can't but bow. I lay my hope before you now.

In your own hopes, I don't deserve. I live to serve your majesty.

God of Heaven, worship you.

[ 71 : 11 ] Love eternal, faithful and true. Through both nations, rancid souls.

Love eternal, faithful and true. I live to serve your majesty. Oh, with me, I shall be praise.

Through majesty, I am the power. I lay my hope before you now.

In your royal world. I don't deserve. I live to serve your majesty.

Your majesty, I can't but bow. I lay my hope before you now.

[ 72 : 18 ] Your majesty, I can't but bow. I live to serve your majesty.

Your majesty, I can't but bow. I live to serve your majesty. And so we come to a time now of intercessions and prayers for others.

Let us pray. You are a king then, said Pilate. And Jesus answered, you are right in saying I am a king.

In fact, for this reason I was born and for this I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.

What is truth, Pilate asked. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are the way, the truth, and the life.

[ 73 : 27 ] Thank you that you obediently followed your Father's will and took that long, painful journey to the cross for each one of us here today. That we believe in your salvation, not just for us, Lord, but also for everyone else in this world that you love as a child.

And thank you, Lord, that you promise that if we have faith in you, we can ask you for anything in your name and you will do it. And so, Father, we bring today our prayers of intercession for your world, for our country, town, and our fellowship friends and families before you.

Lord, we pray for those areas of the world suffering right now because of war and all of its escalation and all its consequential effects.

We bring before you, Lord, those in Iran, Lebanon, Yemen, Gaza, Israel, the Gulf states, Russia, Ukraine, and sadly so many other nations.

Lord, if it be your will, please bring your peace, your perfect peace that passes all understanding.

Please, Father, stop the escalating violence. End the fighting. Restore hope to the people. Protect those that are threatened and heal those that are injured.

[ 74 : 51 ] And Lord, today we pray especially for Christians in these areas that they remain strong and faithful to you and that they can show your light and love to those suffering around them, Father.

We pray that they will know your Holy Spirit's presence with them each day. Please keep them safe and strong in you, Lord. And Father, we dare to pray for the leaders of these nations that they may miraculously come to know you and be transformed by your Holy Spirit into leaders that govern with your wisdom, love, and vision for their people.

You are a mighty God. You are a mighty God. And we believe you can do this, Lord, if it be your will. Help us not to stop praying boldly for this miracle.

And in this country, Lord, we pray for our leaders, both of our churches and in our government.

Father, we pray for your wisdom, for discernment, for compassion, and for courage to make caring, righteous, and brave decisions that promote peace and your values for the British people.

Particularly today, Lord, I pray for Derby and for all the people that have been injured in an incident that's just happened there recently. Lord, I pray for healing for the families of those that have been injured.

[ 76 : 10 ] And I pray also for the emergency workers and the doctors working with them. But, Lord, I particularly pray that no hatred will follow this and that peace will remain for the people of Derby.

And in our town, Lord, we pray for our counter-councillors, the mayor and parish teams, that they work for the good of the community entrusted to them and spend money wisely, Lord.

But we especially pray for their ongoing vision for the development of the eastern side of this town, which includes the demolition and future plans for the car park next door to this church.

Lord, how this is going to affect our church's day-to-day work for you, we are uncertain. But we know, Lord, that we can be completely confident that you have a plan for this and that you are working for the good of High Wycombe and for your work with those that love you here at Union.

And we pray, Lord, that you will reflect our love in our dealings with the council over this situation.

And, Lord, as we move into this Easter week, we remember the amazing sacrifice you've made for each one of us as you went to the cross.

[ 77 : 16 ] Help us to take all the opportunities that you have, that we have, to share this good news of what you have done for us with all those that we meet. And particularly prompt us, Lord, to invite those that you have been speaking to, to our Easter celebrations, and urge us to keep praying for those that we have committed to share your love with this year.

We especially pray on Easter Sunday morning for Christy and Georgina as they come to the waters of baptism, that your spirit will shine through them, that you will use the service as a wonderful witness to many, and that they will know your presence and protection and love as they proclaim their faith and love for you.

We also put before you our Easter holiday club, and we thank you so much, Lord, for the 95 children signed up for this. We pray you will be preparing their hearts to be open to your word and love, and that this might be a transformative time for them and for the lives of their families, Lord.

And we pray for all those involved from the church, for health, stamina, joy, and for all to go smoothly, Lord. May it be a great time of encouragement and blessing for all involved.

Please protect the whole event, Lord, keep everyone safe, and keep us focused on you throughout the week. And finally, Lord, we pray for those in our fellowship and families and circle of friends who may be struggling at this time.

[ 78 : 43 ] We particularly put before you at the moment the Hamilton family, Lord, for Judith and for her father, who is just post-surgery. And we pray, Lord, that you will give your peace to them and to him, Lord, that they may know that he is in your hands and that you are working in that situation, Lord.

And now, quietly in our own minds, we pray for those in our friends and family who might be struggling, whether it be due to physical ailment, spiritual struggles, mental health issues, bereavement, or one of life's many stresses that hit us all at one time or another.

Lord, help us to be faithful in prayer for those that we have just named.

Help us to support and serve them if we can. Help us to show them your love. And thank you, Lord, that you hear our prayers and delight in answering them in your timing, Lord.

For we ask them all in the name of our precious Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen. Thanks so much, Sarah.

[ 80 : 09 ] Let's stand and let's sing together our final song, the wonderful words of how great thou art. So let's stand together. O Lord, my God, when I need awesome wonder, I'll see the Lord, the works that I have had made.

I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, and sing my song, my heart throughout, the universe this day.

And sing my song, my Savior God to thee.

I'll break the heart, I'll break the heart. And sing my song, my Savior God to thee.

I'll break the heart, I'll break the heart. Hope in the world, my forest place, my heart.

[ 82 : 01 ] And hear the birds, sing sweetly in the trees. When I look down, the lovely mountain bandwagon, And hear the birds, and feel the gentle breeze.

And sing my song, my Savior God to thee. I'll break the heart, I'll break the heart.

And sing my song, my Savior God to thee. I'll break the heart, I'll break the heart.

My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. My god that fades from the earth. He led and died to take away my sin.

Then sings my soul, my Savior, love to Thee. How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

[ 84 : 09 ] Then sings my soul, my Savior, love to Thee. How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

Then what shall come with shout of acclamation? And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart?

Then shall I bow in humble adoration? And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art.

Then sings my soul, my Savior, God to Thee. How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

Then sings my soul, my Savior, love to Thee. How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

[ 85 : 46 ] Wonderful words. Let's please take a seat. And we'll just a reminder that we've got an opportunity to continue our fellowship together.

There's some coffee and tea out of the back there. And also to my left through the welcome space.

Please stay and have that opportunity to continue sharing and getting to know one another.

There is an opportunity for prayer as well. We've got a number of people with little pray hand badges or people who've got a lanyard on. We would love to pray with you. If you would like to spend that time after the service, please do take that opportunity to pray together.

Also, parents, if you are about to grab your coffee, make sure you grab your child first to relieve our teams that are looking after them currently at the moment before you grab your coffee.

Let's pray as we conclude our time together. Father, again, we are thankful for the start of this incredible week. And we do pray that, God, as we move through this week, God, you will continue to guide our thoughts.

[ 87 : 05 ] That you will continue to enable us to reflect your truth in the conversations that we have with those that we meet. And, Father, as we walk through and are reminded again of your sacrifice and your forgiveness and your love.

God, I pray that, again, for each and every one of us, that will become a new reality. Father, with thankful hearts, we commit our lives afresh to you.

And to him who is able to do immeasurably more than we all ask or can imagine. According to his power that is at work within us.

To him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever. Ever and forever. Amen. For those who are out meeting after the service in the music ministry team, we'll aim to meet in the lower lounge just before 12.

Probably about 10 to 5 to get that meeting started. Have a great week. And we'll see you over the course of this week. Bless you. Thank you.

[ 88 : 20 ] Thank you. Thank you.