



**GOD ON TRIAL: MISCONCEPTIONS**

Midweek Lent

# **BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH** | York, Nebraska

*February 14, 2024*

## **SERIES THEME: GOD ON TRIAL**

The unbelieving world has always insisted on putting God on trial. As our society becomes more secular, we Christians are increasingly aware of the many ways in which God—and his people—are judged. Temptations are many in this environment: treating unbelievers as enemies, retreating from the world, even questioning God ourselves. How do we live as people of God in this hostile world? We find our model—and our motivation—in Jesus. This series takes us back to the moments when God was literally on trial before humankind in the person of Christ. In these inspired episodes, we find forgiveness for us and all people, love for our enemies, strength for our faith, and courage to testify to the truth.

**Worship Leader**

Pastor Justin Wilkens

**Organist/Pianist**

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## **Acknowledgments**

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## Opening Hymn: 784 Now the Light Has Gone Away

- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Now the light has gone away;<br>Father, listen while I pray,<br>asking you to watch and keep<br>and to send me quiet sleep.   | O bring me and all I love<br>to your happy home above. |   |
| 2 | Jesus, Savior, wash away<br>all that I've done wrong today.<br>Make me ever more like you,<br>good and gentle, kind and true. | 4  | Now my evening praise I give;<br>you once died that I might live.<br>All your precious gifts are free—<br>oh, how good you are to me! |
| 3 | Let my near and dear ones be<br>safe with you eternally.  | 5  | Ah, my best and kindest Friend,<br>you will love me to the end.<br>Let me love you more and more,<br>always better than before.       |

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836–1879, alt.  
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## Confession of Sins

In the name of our God, to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hidden.

**Amen.**

**I confess that I am by nature sinful.**

**I am guilty of many sins.**

**I am distressed by the sins that trouble me.**

**For all this I am sorry. I pray for forgiveness.**

**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love.**

Jesus says to his people, "If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven." His death paid for the guilt of your sins and the sins of the whole world. Do you believe this?

**Yes, I believe.**

By the authority of Christ, I forgive you your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## Psalm: 2A You Are My Son

### Refrain



### Tone

Why do the / nations rage?

Why do the peoples / plot in vain?

The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers assemble a- / gainst the LORD  
and against his A- / noointed One. *Refrain*

He who sits in / heaven laughs;  
the Lord / scoffs at them.

Then he addresses them in his anger and frightens them with his fury, / saying,  
"I have set my King on Zion, my / holy hill." *Refrain*

I will declare the / LORD's decree:

He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have be- / gotten you."

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son**

**and to the / Holy Spirit,**

**as it was in the be- / ginning,**

**is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

Text: translation

Tune: Thomas Pavlechko

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## **Psalm Prayer**

Lord, keep us safe in the refuge of your anointed Son, so that when the nations rage against him, we are not terrified. You have begotten him from eternity and have seated him on your throne in heaven. Let us see him as he truly is, the One who lives and rules with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **Passion History**

*Matthew 26:1–35*

### **The Plot Against Jesus**

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> “You know that after two days it will be the Passover, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

<sup>3</sup> Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas. <sup>4</sup> They plotted together how to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. <sup>5</sup> But they said, “Not during the Festival, or else there might be a riot among the people.”

### **Mary Anoints Jesus**

<sup>6</sup> When Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, <sup>7</sup> a woman approached him holding an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume. She poured it on his head as he was reclining at the table. <sup>8</sup> But when his disciples saw this, they were upset and said, “Why this waste? <sup>9</sup> This perfume could have been sold for a lot of money and given to the poor.”

<sup>10</sup> Jesus was aware of this and said to them, “Why are you causing trouble for this woman? She has done a beautiful thing for me. <sup>11</sup> You are always going to have the poor with you, but you are not always going to have me. <sup>12</sup> When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. <sup>13</sup> Amen I tell you: Wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her.”

### **Judas Plans to Betray Jesus**

<sup>14</sup> Then one of the Twelve, the one named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup> and said, “What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup> From that time on Judas was looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

### **Jesus Celebrates the Passover**

<sup>17</sup> On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

<sup>18</sup> He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him the Teacher says, ‘My time is near. I will observe the Passover with my disciples at your house.’”

<sup>19</sup> The disciples did as Jesus commanded them and prepared the Passover. <sup>20</sup> When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.

## **One Will Betray Jesus**

<sup>21</sup> As they were eating, he said, "Amen I tell you: One of you will betray me."

<sup>22</sup> They were very sad and began to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I, Lord?"

<sup>23</sup> He replied, "The one who dipped his hand in the bowl with me will betray me. <sup>24</sup> The Son of Man is going just as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born."

<sup>25</sup> Judas, who betrayed him, replied, "Surely, not I, Rabbi?"

He said to him, "Yes, you are the one."

## **The Lord's Supper**

<sup>26</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples. He said, "Take, eat, this is my body." <sup>27</sup> Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the new testament, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you that I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." <sup>30</sup> After they sang a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

## **Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial**

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "This night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' <sup>32</sup> But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

<sup>33</sup> Peter answered him, "Even if all fall away because of you, I will never fall away."

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to him, "Amen I tell you: Tonight before the rooster crows you will deny me three times."

<sup>35</sup> Peter said to him, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you." And all the disciples said the same.

## Hymn of the Day: 395 What Grace Is This

- 1 What grace is this! My Lord and King  
has set his face to suffering.  
My God eternal dies to bring  
eternal life to me.
- 2 What grace is this—that very God  
would stoop to lift a cross of wood  
and walk a road of rock and blood,  
a sinner’s road, for me.
- 3 What grace is this! Though Lord of all,  
he yields to Pontius Pilate’s law  
and lets the Roman hammers draw  
a rush of blood for me.
- 4 What grace is this! Rude agonies!  
With common thieves he hangs and  
bleeds.  
The sinless Son bears each misdeed;  
he pays for all, for me.
- 5 What grace is this! Once wrapped in  
cloths  
and gently laid in manger-trough,  
he’s taken, dead, from wretched cross  
and wrapped again for me.
- 6 What grace is this? How can it be?  
He wears this raw humility  
to lift me to eternity.  
Such grace—sweet grace—for me.

Text: Laurie F. Gauger, b. 1965

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## Sermon

### Reading

*Luke 23:1–12*

<sup>1</sup>The whole group of them got up and brought him before Pilate. <sup>2</sup>They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this fellow misleading our nation, forbidding the payment of taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.”

<sup>3</sup>Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

“It is as you say,” Jesus replied.

<sup>4</sup>Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

<sup>5</sup>But they kept insisting, “He stirs up the people, teaching all through Judea, beginning from Galilee all the way here.” <sup>6</sup>When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was a Galilean. <sup>7</sup>When he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during those days.

<sup>8</sup>When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad. For a long time, he had wanted to see him, because he had heard many things about him. He hoped to see some miracle performed by him. <sup>9</sup>He questioned him with many words, but Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup>The chief priests and the experts in the law stood there, vehemently accusing him. <sup>11</sup>Herod, along with his soldiers, treated him with contempt and ridiculed him. Dressing him in bright clothing, he sent him back to

Pilate. <sup>12</sup> Herod and Pilate became friends with each other on that day. Before this they had been enemies of each other.

## Offering

### Offering Hymn: 400 Sweet the Moments, Rich in Blessing

*sts. 1–2*

- 1 Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,  
which before the cross we spend,  
life and health and peace possessing  
from the sinner's dying friend.
- 2 Here we rest in wonder, viewing  
all our sins on Jesus laid;  
here we see redemption flowing  
from the sacrifice he made.

Text: alt. Walter Shirley, 1725–1786; James Allen, 1734–1804  
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## Responsive Prayer

Gracious Lord, according to your will and promise,  
**You sent your Son into our world to atone for sin and restore eternal life.**

You planned his path to the cross,  
**and he followed it perfectly.**

He confronted the blindness of unbelief, the confusion of doubt, and the hurt of death  
**but was not deterred as he proclaimed your kingdom to the least, the last, and the lost.**

As we hear and contemplate the holy record of our Savior's passion and death,  
**Use the sharp message of the law to empty us of pride and self-reliance.**

Humble us as we view the Savior in his humility,  
**remembering and believing that he endured the cross so we might be freed from its horror.**

In his suffering show us our healing,  
**in his grief show us our joy,**

and in his death show us our life.

**Hear our prayers, Lord, for the sake of Jesus. Amen.**



## **Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## **Blessing**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him.  
**Amen.**

## Closing Hymn: 407 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

- 1 When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the Prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss  
and pour contempt on all my pride.
- 2 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
save in the death of Christ, my God.  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.
- 3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet  
or thorns compose so rich a crown?
- 4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were a tribute far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.

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