



GOD ON TRIAL: SYMPATHY

Midweek Lent

BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | York, Nebraska

February 28, 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 Ray Beckmann

Organist/Pianist

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Acknowledgments

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Opening Hymn: 784 Now the Light Has Gone Away

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

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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: 138A Your Praises, God, I'm Bringing



1 Your prais - es, God, I'm bring - ing; my heart with joy is
2 When deep - est need had felled me, your stead - fast love up -
3 Though you, O God, are ho - ly, yet you re - gard the
4 All peo - ples shall ac - claim you, and wor - ship - ing shall



sing - ing its thanks for gifts out - poured.
held me; my ur - gent prayer you heard.
low - ly and raise them from the dust.
name you the God of time and space.



Now, in your pres - ence kneel - ing, a - gain for grace ap -
When trou - ble sore as - sailed me, your mer - cy nev - er
Your prom - ise holds for - ev - er: "I will for - sake you
And I will join my prais - es with hymns the whole world



peal - ing, in qui - et - ness I wait your word.
failed me. You strength - ened me and I en - dured.
nev - er!" My God, my rock, in you I trust.
rais - es to you, the God of bound - less grace!

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle

Tune: Heinrich Isaac

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Psalm Prayer

Lord, we bow down to you in thankful praise. You have made your ways known to both lowly and great on the earth. You have not abandoned the work of your hands, but instead you have redeemed us through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Passion History

Matthew 26:57-75

⁵⁷ Those who had arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the experts in the law and the elders were assembled. ⁵⁸ Peter was following him at a distance and went as far as the courtyard of the high priest. He went inside and sat down with the guards to see how it would turn out.

⁵⁹ The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰ They found none, even though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward ⁶¹ and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

⁶² The high priest stood up and said to him, "Have you no answer? What is this that these men are testifying against you?" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I place you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God!"

⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "It is as you have said. But I tell you, soon you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? See, you have just heard the blasphemy! ⁶⁶ What do you think?"

They answered, "He is deserving of death!" ⁶⁷ Then they spit in his face and punched him. Some slapped him ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophesy to us, Christ! Who hit you?"

Peter Denies Jesus

⁶⁹ Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl came to him and said, "You were also with Jesus the Galilean."

⁷⁰ But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I don't know what you're talking about."

⁷¹ When Peter went out to the entryway, someone else saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

⁷² Again Peter denied it with an oath and said, "I do not know the man."

⁷³ After a little while those who stood by came and said to Peter, "Surely you are also one of them because even your accent gives you away."

⁷⁴ Then he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man!" Just then the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Hymn of the Day: 425 Go to Dark Gethsemane

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|--|--|
| 1 Go to dark Gethsemane, all who feel the tempter's pow'r; your Redeemer's conflict see, watch with him one bitter hour. Turn not from his griefs away; learn from Jesus Christ to pray. | 3 Calv'ry's mournful mountain climb; there, adoring at his feet, mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete. "It is finished!" hear him cry; learn from Jesus Christ to die. |
| 2 Follow to the judgment hall, view the Lord of life arraigned. Oh, the wormwood and the gall, oh, the pangs his soul sustained! Shun not suffering, pain, or loss; learn from him to bear the cross. | 4 Early hasten to the tomb where they laid his breathless clay; all is solitude and gloom. Who has taken him away? Christ is ris'n! He meets our eyes. Savior, teach us so to rise. |

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Sermon

Reading

Luke 23:26-34

The Crucifixion of Jesus

²⁶ As they led him away, they seized Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country. They placed the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ A large crowd of people was following him, including women who were mourning and wailing for him. ²⁸ Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ Be sure of this: The days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never gave birth, and the breasts that never nursed.' ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' ³¹ For if they do these things to the green wood, what will happen to the dry?"

³² Two other men, who were criminals, were led away with Jesus to be executed.

³³ When they came to the place called The Skull, they crucified him there with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left.

³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
They cast lots to divide his garments among them.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 433 God Was There on Calvary

sts. 1, 5–6

- 1 God was there on Calvary,
God the Father's only Son,
dying that the world might live,
there on Calvary.

- 5 Life was there on Calvary,
flowing from his wounded side,
spent that death itself might die
there on Calvary.

- 6 We were there on Calvary;
we were pardoned, saved, set free,
saved to live eternally—
blessèd Calvary!

Text: Kurt J. Eggert, 1923–1993

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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: 537 Word of God, Come Down on Earth

- 1 Word of God, come down on earth,
living rain from heav'n descending;
touch our hearts and bring to birth
faith and hope and love unending.
Word almighty, we revere you;
Word made flesh, we long to hear
you.
- 2 Word eternal, throned on high,
Word that brought to life creation,
Word that came from heav'n to die,
crucified for our salvation,
saving Word, the world restoring,
speak to us, your love outpouring.
- 3 Word that caused blind eyes to see,
speak and heal our mortal
blindness;
deaf we are: our healer be;
loose our tongues to tell your
kindness.
Be our Word in pity spoken,
heal the world, by sin now broken.
- 4 Word that speaks your Father's love,
one with him beyond all telling,
Word that sends us from above,
God the Spirit, with us dwelling,
Word of truth, to all truth lead us;
Word of life, with one bread feed us.