



GOD ON TRIAL: RESTRAINT

Midweek Lent

BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | York, Nebraska

March 13, 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 Fred Berger

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. |

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?

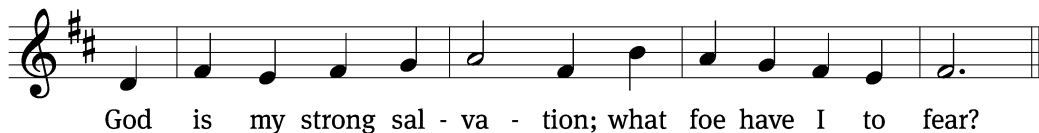
Yes, I believe.

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.

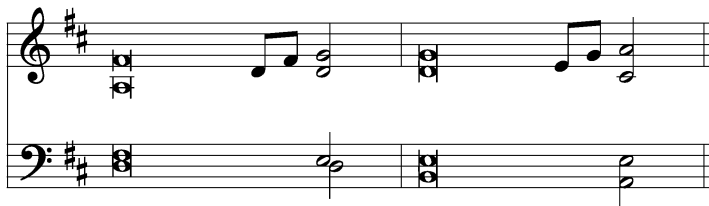
Amen.

Psalm: 71A God Is My Strong Salvation

Refrain



Tone



In you, LORD, I have taken / refuge;
let me never be / put to shame.
In your righteousness, rescue me and de- / liver me;
turn your ear to me and / save me.
Be my rock of / refuge,
to which I can / always go. *Refrain*

Since my youth, God, you have / taught me,
and to this day I declare your / marv'lous deeds.
Even when I am / old and gray,
do not forsake / me, my God,
till I declare your power to the next gener- / ation,
your mighty acts to all who / are to come.

**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***

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Psalm Prayer

Lord God, support us all the years of our lives that we may follow your gracious will both in good times and bad, that our lives may be an unending testimony to your love and faithfulness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Passion History or other reading(s)

Matthew 27:1–26

¹ Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people reached the decision to put Jesus to death. ² They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pontius Pilate, the governor.

The End of Judas

³ Then when Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he felt remorse. He brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders ⁴ and said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? That's your problem."

⁵ He threw the pieces of silver into the temple and left. Then he went out and hanged himself. ⁶ The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put these into the treasury, since it is blood money." ⁷ They reached a decision to buy the potter's field with the money, as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸ So that field has been called The Field of Blood to this day. ⁹ Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price the sons of Israel had set for him, ¹⁰ and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord commanded me.

Jesus' Trial in Pilate's Court

¹¹ When Jesus stood in the presence of the governor, the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

¹² When he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. ¹³ Then Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear how many things they are testifying against you?"

¹⁴ But he did not answer him—not even one word, so that the governor was very surprised.

Barabbas or Jesus?

¹⁵ At the time of the Festival the governor had a custom to release to the crowd any one prisoner they wanted. ¹⁶ At that time they were holding a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when they were assembled, Pilate said to them, "Which one do you want me to release to you? Barabbas—or Jesus, who is called Christ?" ¹⁸ For Pilate knew that they had handed Jesus over to him because of envy.

¹⁹ While he was sitting on the judgment seat, Pilate's wife sent him a message. "Have nothing to do with that righteous man," she said, "since I have suffered many things today in a dream

because of him.”²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus put to death.²¹ The governor asked them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

“Barabbas!” they said.

²² Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?”

They all said to him, “Crucify him!”

²³ But the governor said, “Why? What has he done wrong?”

But they kept shouting even louder: “Crucify him!”

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing and that instead it was turning into a riot, he took water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, “I am innocent of this righteous man’s blood. It is your responsibility.”

²⁵ And all the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them, but he had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified.

Hymn of the Day: 515 Christ Is the World’s Light

- 1 Christ is the world’s light, Christ and none other;
born in our darkness, he became our brother.
If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
Glory to God on high!
- 2 Christ is the world’s peace, Christ and none other;
no one can serve him and despise another.
Who else unites us, one with God the Father?
Glory to God on high!
- 3 Christ is the world’s life, Christ and none other;
sold once for silver, murdered here, our brother.
He who redeemed us reigns with God the Father:
Glory to God on high!
- 4 Give God the glory, God and none other;
give God the glory, Spirit, Son, and Father;
give God the glory, God with us, our brother:
Glory to God on high!

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Sermon

Sermon Text

Luke 22:47–53

Jesus Arrested

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd appeared, and the man called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He came near to Jesus to kiss him. ⁴⁸ But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

⁴⁹ When those who were around him saw what was about to happen, they said to him, "Lord, should we strike with a sword?" ⁵⁰ Then one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

⁵¹ But Jesus responded, "Stop! No more of this!" Then he touched the servant's ear and healed him. ⁵² Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as you would against a robber, with swords and clubs? ⁵³ Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour—when darkness rules."

Offering

Offering Hymn: 740 O God, My Faithful God

sts. 1, 4

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|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | O God, my faithful God, O Fountain ever flowing, who good and perfect gifts in mercy are bestowing, give me a healthy frame, and may I have within a conscience free from blame, a soul unhurt by sin. | 4 | Lord, let me win my foes with kindly words and actions, and let me find good friends for counsel and correction. Help me, as you have taught, to love both great and small and by your Spirit's might to live in peace with all. |
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Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; Johann Heermann, 1585–1647, abr.
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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: 397 My Song Is Love Unknown

- 1 My song is love unknown,
my Savior's love to me,
love to the loveless shown
that they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I
that for my sake
my Lord should take
frail flesh and die?
- 2 He came from his blest throne
salvation to bestow,
but such disdain! So few
the longed-for Christ would know!
But oh, my friend,
my friend indeed,
who at my need
his life did spend!
- 3 Sometimes they strew his way
and his sweet praises sing,
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King.
Then "Crucify!"
is all their breath,
and for his death
they thirst and cry.
- 4 Why? What has my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
he gave the blind their sight.
- Sweet injuries!
Yet they at these
themselves displease
and 'gainst him rise.
- 5 They rise and needs will have
my dear Lord made away.
A murderer they save,
the Prince of life they slay.
Yet cheerful he
to suff'ring goes
that he his foes
from death might free.
- 6 In life no house, no home
my Lord on earth might have;
in death no friendly tomb
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say?
Heav'n was his home
but mine the tomb
wherein he lay.
- 7 Here might I stay and sing;
no story so divine,
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like thine.
This is my friend,
in whose sweet praise
I all my days
could gladly spend!

Text: Samuel Crossman, c. 1624–1683, alt.
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