

Good Friday Service

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Date: 29 March 2024

Preacher: Donald Smith

[0 : 0 0] Well, good evening, everyone, and a very warm welcome to you all to our Good Friday service here at Bon Accord. It is wonderful to have you here with us. Let me extend a special welcome to any of you here who might not be a regular here at Bon Accord, perhaps you're visiting, perhaps a friend or family member brought you along. It is wonderful to have you here with us as we remember and reflect on the events of Good Friday, a day we call Good not because of what Jesus had to suffer, but because of what he willingly suffered and subjected himself to, that we might be saved in his name. And so as we do that this evening, as we reflect on the story of Easter, we're going to do things a little differently to how we normally have our Sunday worship services here. We're going to go through the gospel account of Matthew as he retells the events of this day, and various members of our congregation are going to come and read portions of that scripture to us. And we're going to respond to them in song as we confess our sin and rejoice in the Savior that God has sent in his Son, Jesus Christ.

We're going to stop off just a couple of moments, I'll come up, and just reflect on what we've been reading. I'm not going to say anything profound, I'm not going to speak for too long, but just take a moment to take in what we've read in the passages that we hear. And then in the middle of the service this evening as well, we're delighted to be hearing from William, William Campbell. I'm sure many of you will know him. Some of you maybe don't know him, he is one of our members here at Bon Accord, and he's going to come and share his testimony with us. So we're really looking forward to that, it'll be a real joy to hear your story, William. There'll also be tea and coffee afterwards, so please do stay around if you can. It'd be great to just get some more time to chat with you all.

We're going to begin by reading from Isaiah 53, a book of the Old Testament where Isaiah the prophet speaks so clearly about Jesus' suffering. So I'm just going to read a few verses from Isaiah 53, and I'm going to read verse 4 to 6 as we begin our time together.

Here are these words written about Jesus. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us have turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Let us pray together.

[3 : 3 0] Our Father in heaven, we come before you now as the sheep of your pasture, confessing that we have gone astray, each of us having turned our own way.

That you have sent your Son, the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for his own. And as we come now and hear from your word, of what you have done to bring us under your loving care, bearing the punishment we deserve, we pray that you would renew and strengthen our love for you, as we marvel at the love you have for us.

And we pray that any who do not yet know you, who are with us here this evening, would hear the gospel and put their faith and trust in you alone, our rock and our salvation.

In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen. We're going to begin by singing the hymn, Behold Our God. The words will be on the screens around.

So please do stand if you're able as we sing together. And then Edna is going to come up and read for us afterwards from the beginning of Matthew 26. Amen. Amen.

[5 : 13] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Who has given counsel to the Lord?

Who can question any of His words? Who can teach someone who knows all this?

Who can follow all His wondrous deeds? Behold our God, seeking on His throne, Come let us adore Him.

[6 : 55] Behold our King, nothing can compare, Come let us adore Him.

Who has held the guilt of His hand, Bearing all the guilt of sinful man, God eternal, humble to the grave, Jesus, Savior, risen now to reign.

Behold our King, nothing can compare, Come let us adore Him.

Behold our King, nothing can compare, Come let us adore Him.

Our first reading is from Matthew chapter 26, and it's on page 995 of the Church Bible.

[8 : 39] Matthew 26, reading from verse 1 through to verse 30. This is God's word.

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, He said to His disciples, As you know, the Passover is two days away, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill Him.

But not during the festival, they said, or there may be a riot among the people. While Jesus was in Bethany, in the home of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which he poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. Why this waste? they asked. This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.

[9 : 55] Aware of this, Jesus said to them, Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.

When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

Then one of the twelve, the one called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and asked, What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?

So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on, Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over. On the first day of the festival of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?

He replied, Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, The teacher says, My appointed time is near.

[11 : 16] I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house. So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the twelve. And while they were eating, he said, Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.

They were very sad and began to say to one another, and began to say to him, one after the other, Surely you don't mean me, Lord.

Jesus replied, The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him.

But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man. It would be better for him if he had not been born. Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi.

[12 : 22] Jesus answered, You have said so. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take and eat.

This is my body. Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink from it, all of you.

This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Amen. Thank you so much, Edna.

As we respond to that reading, we are going to sing again, this time, another hymn, His Mercy is More. And as we sing this hymn, we just reflect on those words we've been reading at Jesus, knowing he is having to break his body and shed his blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

[13 : 45] We'll sing these wonderful words, What riches of kindness he lavished on us. His blood was the payment, his life was the cost. We stood neath a debt we could never afford.

Our sins, they are many, but his mercy is more. So let us stand as we sing these words together and then Eugene's going to come and continue our reading for us.

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A mission, although it becomes a fair stop, through him to the sea with a water for sure.

Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more.

[14 : 56] Praise the Lord. Stronger than darkness, new and reward. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

The patience, the great as we constantly roll, what Father so tender is calling us more.

He welcomes the weakest, the finest, the poor. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. His mercy is more.

His mercy is more. His mercy is more. His mercy is more. His mercy is more. His mercy is more.

[16 : 05] His mercy is born. The wishes of kindness he ramished on us.

His blood was the payment, his life was the cost. His good he does and we do never afford.

Our sins may our many, his mercy is born. Praise the Lord, his mercy is born.

Stronger than darkness, new every Lord. Our sins may our many, his mercy is born.

Praise the Lord, his mercy is born. Stronger than darkness, new every Lord.

[17 : 24] Our sins may our many, his mercy is born. Then Jesus told them, Peter replied, Truly I tell you, Jesus answered, This very night, before the cop crows, you will disown me three times.

But Peter declared, Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you. And all the other disciples said the same. Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, Sit here while I go over there and pray.

He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

Stay here and keep watch with me. Going a little further, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.

Yet, not as I will, but as you will. Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?

[19 : 18] He asked Peter. Watch and pray, so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away a second time and prayed, My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.

When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more, and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.

Rise, let us go. Here comes my betrayer. While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived.

With him was a large crowd, armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them, The one I kiss is the man.

[20 : 30] Arrest him. Going at once to Jesus, Judas says, Greetings, Rabbi, and kissed him. Jesus replied, Do what you came for, friend.

Then the man stepped forward and seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus' companions, reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ears. Put your sword back in its place, Jesus said to him, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

Do you think I cannot call on my father and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled that say that it must happen in this way?

In that hour, Jesus said to the crowd, Am I leading a rebellion that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple's courts teaching and you did not arrest me.

But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophet might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. Thank you, Eugene.

[21 : 46] We're just going to pause for a minute here to catch our breath because we've covered a lot of ground in those two readings. But let me just highlight a few things I think really worth noting from what we have just heard.

from the very beginning, Jesus knows he is going to be crucified, doesn't he? At the very start of this narrative, Jesus says the Passover is two days away when the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.

Jesus knows the path he is walking down and he knows it is one that will lead to his crucifixion and he knows that he is going to be betrayed, doesn't he?

As the disciples are celebrating the Passover together, read that when evening came, Jesus was reclining at table with the twelve and while they were eating, he said, truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.

He knows he is going to be crucified. He knows he is going to be betrayed. And he knows he is going to be abandoned. Completely and utterly left alone.

[23 : 14] This very night you will all fall away on account of me. For it is written, I will strike the shepherds and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

The sheep will scatter. And that is exactly what we see happen, isn't it? Jesus is praying in the garden of Gethsemane.

He began to be sorrowful and troubled, so sorrowful and troubled that he says to the disciples with him, my soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. He is not just a bit sad, is he? He is in the deepest depths of despair.

And so he says to his friends, he says to his disciples, stay here and keep watch with me. In our darkest moments, there is nothing worse is there than being alone.

[24 : 35] that as Jesus approached the darkest moments in all history, facing not only crucifixion, but bearing the guilt of every one of our sins.

his sheep scattered. I don't know if you noticed as Eugene read that passage for us.

At the beginning, verse 31, we read, this very night you will all fall away on account of me. And then in verse 56, all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Jesus is the good shepherd who came to save his sheep in the darkest of hours.

In the moment when his soul is overwhelmed with sorrow even to the point of death, his sheep, his followers, his friends run from him.

[25 : 55] In a moment, we're going to sing from Isaiah 53, the words that we read at the beginning of the service. We can read about the disciples fleeing from Jesus as he nears the point of death and think, how could they?

How could they abandon him who had shown such love, who had taught them so much, who had been by their side for years, who they had seen perform so many miracles, who they knew was the Christ, who they confessed to be the Son of God?

How could they run from him? But as Isaiah 53 says, we all, we all, like sheep, have gone astray.

Each of us has turned to our own way. As the disciples fled from Jesus, the sheep were scattering from the shepherds, abandoning their creator, their redeemer, and their friends.

Not only would we have done the same in their situation, we have done the same, albeit in different circumstances, we have turned our own way.

[27 : 27] We have ignored the voice and pleas of the good shepherds. We have strayed from his good and loving care. And yet, those are the very sheep that Jesus keeps on going for.

He is left alone, but he continues on this path. He continues down this road to crucifixion for the very ones who have abandoned him.

He continues on the most sorrowful path, to the most painful death, bearing the greatest punishment for the very ones who fled from him in his moment of greatest sorrow.

So let us sing now from Isaiah 53. I'm going to sing what is the equivalent of verses 6 to 9. As we marvel at the wonder of the good shepherds laying down his life for scattered sheep who have gone astray.

So let us stand once more as we sing together before Ailey is going to come and continue the reading for us. we all like sheep have gone astray.

[29 : 13] We wanted to be free and yet the Lord has made on him all our iniquity.

He was afflicted and oppressed yet yet not a word he said in silence like a sheep that shorn for lamb to slaughter them.

son of wicked sin pier –Entendence who can speak, he met a sinner's hand.

He died alone with wicked men, with rich men washed his grave.

Though innocent in words and feet, he died our souls to save.

[31 : 32] This is Matthew chapter 26 verses 57 to 75 which is on page 997 of the church Bible.

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Cephas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest.

he entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death.

But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally, two came forward and declared, this fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you? But Jesus remained silent.

[32 : 38] The high priest said to him, I charge you under oath by the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God. You have said so, Jesus replied. But I say to all of you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One, coming on the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, he has spoken blasphemy. Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?

He is worthy of death, they answered. Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, prophesy to us, Messiah, who hit you?

Now Peter was sitting outside the courtyard and a servant girl came to him. You also were with Jesus of Galilee, she said. He denied it for them all. I don't know what you're talking about, he said.

Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him, and said to the people there, this fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth. He denied it again with an oath. I don't know the man.

[33 : 46] After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, surely you're one of them, your accent gives you away. Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, I don't know the man.

Immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the words that Jesus had spoken, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times. And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Thank you so much, Ailey.

We're going to pick up that reading in Matthew chapter 27 in just a little while. But before we do so, we're going to hear from William. William's going to come up and share his testimony with us.

Thank you so much for being willing, William, to come and share your story of how you've come to know Jesus and know life in him. So I'm just going to invite you up now and please do just be praying for William as he comes and I'm sure he's nervous about sharing his testimony.

[34 : 48] Thanks, William. Hi there.

For anyone who doesn't know me, I'm William. My wife, Caitlin and I have been Christians for about four years and have been coming to Bonacord for just over a year now. I was baptized here in September last year and our five-month-old daughter Ada was baptized just a few weeks ago.

But I didn't grow up in church. I wasn't blessed to be raised by Christian parents. Unfortunately, I had a rough childhood and I am actually a survivor of child abuse.

my parents separated when I was five and my sister and I lived with our mother and at the time undiagnosed schizophrenic who couldn't cope and would unfortunately take that out on us and others around us for years.

I won't go into all the details of that time, but it got to the point when eventually we went to live with my dad and ultimately I had to give evidence in court to have my mother's parental rights taken away when I was about 11 years old.

[36 : 03] I didn't know much about God or Jesus back then, just what little I'd heard in school assemblies, but I remember praying to be saved from that situation and even promising that I would be a believer if God would keep my dad alive so that we would remain safe from our mum.

Looking back, God was faithful to those prayers, but I was not. As a teenager, I became a bitter and cynical person who got swept up in what was known as the New Atheism Movement by thinkers like Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens.

I began to think of religious people in quite a negative light. Of course, I didn't actually know any real Christians at the time, but I only saw the most over-the-top negative caricatures in the media, and this made me write off Christianity as a whole.

As I was entering my early 20s, I certainly wasn't living a Christian life. I was going out drinking all the time and making a fool of myself, and I was an angry young man who couldn't believe in the idea of a good God.

First, I was angry at the world for having put me through so much pain and suffering, and for all the suffering of others that I could see in this world. But then I turned those feelings inward.

[37 : 18] It's quite common for survivors of abuse to suffer from depression and to believe that they are to blame for the abuse that they've suffered. And this is what had happened to me. In 2015, at the age of 21, I had become so nihilistic, I believed that my life had no meaning and no real value, that it was all just meaningless happenstance.

And a dark cloud of depression had descended on my mind. I was suffering, and I had no meaning to help me get through it. And I attempted to take my life. By the grace of God, I survived the attempt, and as if someone had immediately flicked a light switch, I instantly had a new lease on life.

And I realized what a horrible and foolish thing I'd just done. For the next few years, I began to try and better myself. I got into a lot of popular self-help books and started having an interest in philosophy and psychology, which led me to ideas like stoicism, that we can't control what happens to us, but we can control how we react.

Which did help me a little bit with things like depression, but I didn't have real hope. I still had an emptiness, the God-shaped hole in the heart. But speaking of the heart, it was around this time that I met Caitlin, who is now my wonderful wife and the mother of our beautiful daughter, Ada.

Caitlin also helped me deal with some of the pain that I'd been going through, just by listening and being there for me. She actually had a free church upbringing, and although was no longer practicing the faith at the time, her best friend was a Christian, and her husband was actually a minister.

[39 : 02] They were the first real Christians that I'd actually spent any time with. They showed me how wrong I was about Christians, and how kind and compassionate they were to me and to others. Through knowing them, I saw a genuine, faithful, incredible Christian witness for the first time.

They would pray for me and my family. They would give thanks for dinners that we shared together. And instead of the old feelings of contempt and bitterness at faith, I actually began to respect it and in some ways craved it myself.

A few years into my relationship with Caitlin, we were talking about how we wanted to get married and have kids and what we wanted our lives to look like. This is when we lived in Elgin during the 2020 lockdowns.

And during this conversation, I asked Caitlin, what about religion? Would you want to get married in a church? Would you want to raise your kids Christian? But it was as if God had placed that question on my lips.

We never really spoke about these things, and certainly not in a positive way. But it turns out that Caitlin actually did. She had been thinking about this for a while. And then during that conversation, what I can only really describe as a wave of emotion, love, peace, and hope, washed over me.

[40 : 11] And in that moment, I just suddenly knew that God was real, and he wanted me to know him. Me, the rationalist, atheistic nihilist, was converted by what I can only really describe as a supernatural, emotional encounter with God's presence.

It's certainly not what I thought would take what it would take to make me believe. I'd have assumed I'd need, you know, hard evidence of the resurrection, the flood, the Garden of Eden, discovered on the news or something.

How little did I know. But God knew what it would really take, and he revealed his existence to me that night. So Caitlin and I spoke for hours that night, trying to make sense of what had happened and what we thought and believed, and what we were going to do about it.

We decided we would try and find a church to listen to online to get a feel for the service and build up our confidence to eventually go and attend. So Caitlin goes off to bed, but I was so fired up I couldn't sleep.

I stayed up to about three in the morning that night, Googling things and watching long YouTube videos about Christianity and theology. When I eventually came to bed, I presented Caitlin with an A4 piece of paper, absolutely covered in scribbled notes.

[41 : 23] Both sides, barely legible. I must have looked mad. But since that day, as Caitlin can attest, there's been a never-ending supply of theology books arriving at the house.

I may have been converted by that emotional experience, but I still needed to learn more and make sense of my objections to the faith. This led me to listen to loads of podcasts and apologists online, like the Unbelievable podcast, John Piper and William Lane Craig.

So we had decided that we were going to go and listen to church online. But we didn't really know where to begin. Our Christian friends recommended Elgin Baptist Church, and so we began listening to their services online.

After a few weeks of this, I began asking our friend, who was a minister, some questions about the Bible, and he offered to do a Bible study together, and a weekly Zoom call, where we could discuss any questions or queries that I'd had.

So we read some of the Gospels and the book of Genesis, and I began to love studying God's Word and the person of Jesus. I remember being on a walk one evening, looking at all the trees and the plants, which made me think of what I'd been reading about in Genesis, the Garden of Eden, and I just marveled at God's creation.

[42 : 37] It was as if the dark cloud of depression that I'd suffered under for so long was being lifted. I could finally truly see how vibrant and beautiful the world is.

I then looked up at the clouds, which were backlit by the setting sun, gorgeous red sky, and I became overwhelmed with emotion again at how God's Son, Jesus Christ, had come to this world, lived the perfect life, and died the worst death to pay for my sins.

And not just the world's sins, but specifically my own. I just started confessing all my sins aloud, anything that I could think of, and I began to weep while praising and thanking God for saving me and Jesus for dying in my place when he had done nothing to deserve it.

Caitlin and I got engaged soon after this, and we got married at Elgin Baptist, and when we moved to Aberdeen, we thought, oh, so many churches here, we don't really know how to find one where we could set down roots.

So we listened to a few of them online again, and we started attending Jared Street Baptist Church. We met some lovely people there, including a couple that were about our age, who must have spotted our shy, clueless faces one Sunday morning, and took it upon themselves to befriend us and invite us to a weekly Bible study they were running.

[43 : 57] As the weeks and months went on, I was getting to the point where I really wanted to be baptized and become a member of the church, but then at the same time, in my spare time, I began to learn about Reformed theology and church history, and I just kind of realized that although we were starting to get to know people there and get involved in the church that we were in, I held some different theological beliefs.

This meant that Caitlin and I had to start looking at different churches again after six months of getting to know people at Jared Street. We came up with a few churches that we wanted to visit, and the first one was Bonacord, and we were just immediately made to feel so welcomed by everyone here.

And I loved the psalm singing and the bold preaching of the word, and that was it. We've never left. We never even went to go visit the other churches because we feel we have found our community and church family here.

This is our home, and we're delighted to be bringing up Ada in this family. Speaking of family as someone who has had a complicated family situation growing up, and as someone who has lost the relationship with one of their parents, what comfort it is to be adopted into God's family.

I have gained the parent of parents, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, my Father in Heaven, through the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And I have gained the hope of resurrection, everlasting life, and the wonders of the world to come, where there will be no suffering.

[45 : 26] This has given my life meaning. My purpose is now following Jesus. Like Paul says in his letter to the Philippians, to live is Christ. The world finally makes sense.

My suffering makes sense. Christ has given me a new heart, which loves his word and his people. I now spend a good portion of my week meeting with fellow Christians or spending time in God's word.

either at the life group Bible studies, the prayer meetings, recently at the Discipleship Explored course, and of course the Sunday services, as well as Bible study at home. And these are all now the highlights of my week.

Looking back, I can see God's hand at play all throughout my life. He used the pain and suffering that I went through as a child to make me more compassionate and understanding. He used my depression to help me appreciate all that is good in life.

He used my skepticism to ignite a passion for apologetics and theology. He used my relationship with Caitlin to bring me into contact with real Christians so that we could both come to God together and eventually become a household of believers, raising Ada in the knowledge of the Lord.

[46 : 36] I will be forever grateful to God for giving me a second chance at life and for all the blessings and challenges that have come my way since he revealed himself to me, a sinner justly condemned to death, who now has, as one of my favorite hymns says, no guilt in life, no fear in death, for this is the power of Christ in me.

Thank you. Thank you so much, William.

That was powerful and moving, wasn't it? It is so wonderful to hear the story of God's grace in your life. And I speak for myself, but I'm sure I speak of many others too when I say what a joy and encouragement that was and how delighted we are to have yourself and Caitlin and Ada as part of our church family too.

I'm going to invite Wilma now to come and continue our reading from Matthew's gospel. We're going to pick up from the start of Matthew chapter 7. Thank you so much, Wilma. Okay, so chapter 27, Judas Hanks himself.

Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. So they bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

[48 : 07] When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.

I have sinned, he said, for I have betrayed innocent blood. What is that to us? They replied. That's your responsibility. So Judas threw the money into the temple and left.

Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, it is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.

So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the field of blood to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled.

They took the 30 pieces of silver, the price set on them by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me. Meanwhile, Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, are you the king of the Jews?

[49 : 13] You have said so, Jesus replied. When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?

But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge, to the great amazement of the governor. Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd.

At that time, they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, which one do you want me to release to you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?

For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him. While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message, don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. Which of the two do you want me to release to you, asked the governor.

[50 : 24] Barabbas, they answered. What shall I do then with Jesus who is called the Messiah, Pilate asked. They all answered, crucify him. Why? What crime has he committed, asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, crucify him. When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd.

I am innocent of this man's blood, he said. It is your responsibility. All the people answered, his blood is on us and on our children. Then he released Barabbas to them, but he had Jesus flogged.

And handed him over to be crucified. Amen. Thank you so much, Wilma.

Well, in response to that reading, we're going to sing from Psalm 22, the Psalter that we find in the Bible. And we're going to sing these words which Jesus will take to his own lips in the coming verses.

[51 : 31] It's a psalm that speaks of the rejection that the Messiah would and did face as he paid the price for our sins. So we sing these words that we're going to be singing.

Oh, Lord, you are my God alone. Be not far off for troubles near. An other helper I have none. By people scorned, reproached by all. We sing these words, not as our own, but as the words of Christ, as we remember what he endured for our sake.

So let us stand once more as we sing together before Angus comes and reads for us. But I'm a worm and all of a man.

By people scorned, reproached by all. And those who see me shake their heads, they stare at me, and thus they fall.

This man has trusted in the Lord, so let him save him from his plight.

[53 : 01] Now let his God deliver him, because in him he takes delight.

Yet you o'erbrought me from the womb when I washed out my mother's breast.

You gave me cause to trust in you, from birth upon you I was cast.

Yes, from my mother's womb till now, O Lord, you are my God alone.

Be not far off, or troubles near, and other ever I have none.

[54 : 43] Matthew 27, verse 27. Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers round him.

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him.

Hail, King of the Jews, they said. They spat on him and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.

After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.

They came to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull. There they offered Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall, but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.

[56 : 01] When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him.

Above his head, they placed the written charge against him. This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself.

Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God. In the same way, the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders mocked him. He saved others, they said, but he can't save himself.

He's the King of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, I am the Son of God.

[57 : 09] In the same way, the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. Thank you, Angus.

We marveled earlier, didn't we, that despite his sheep scattering, the shepherd would willingly continue down the path that he knew led to crucifixion.

And we are now in the middle, aren't we, of seeing just how cruel a crucifixion this was.

He is a man convicted of no crime. Everyone involved in the trial knows he is innocent of what he is accused of.

But he is not set free. The innocent Jesus is brought before the crowds, along with a convicted criminal, Barabbas.

[58 : 27] Who do you want? Asks Pilate. Barabbas! The crowd shout. Barabbas! What shall I do with Jesus?

Crucify him. Why? The crowd give no answer, but shout all the louder.

Crucify him. Why? Jesus is looking out over his own people.

His own creatures. Who he loves. And who he has done no wrong to. He loves his people with a love far greater than any love we have for anyone or anything.

Let's imagine. Let's imagine. Those you love most. Crying out.

[59 : 47] For your crucifixion. Crucify him. And so an innocent man is condemned.

And a guilty man walks free. Jesus is flogged. Jesus is flogged. Stripped and mocked. A crown of thorns set on his head.

Soldiers mockingly kneel before him. The king of heaven and earth. And he stands there silently.

Being spat on and struck on the head again and again. Before being led off to be nailed to a cross.

When they'd nailed his hands and his feet to that cross. And lifted him up to hang by his own wounds.

[60 : 55] Those who passed by hurled insults at him. The chief priests and the teachers of the law. Who had knowingly condemned an innocent man to death. Joined in the mocking.

As did the ones crucified next to him. This is what the shepherd endured. For his sheep.

This is what the innocent son of God. Suffered for sinners. Like you and me. But as we shall soon see.

Not only was Jesus abandoned. By his disciples. Not only was he beaten and crucified. By his own people. He will be forsaken.

By God. This was a death. Like no other. Not only is the physical and mental agony utterly extreme.

[62 : 13] But far worse still. The just punishment for our sin. The wrath of God. That we deserved. Is poured. Is poured. Right upon the stricken shepherds. Every just punishment.

For every sin. Of every believer. Born by him. In that moment. I say that now.

So as we come. And read these verses. After we sing once more. We hear. As we shoot. The anguish.

Of Jesus. Cry. We've read. And sung already. That he was led. Silently. Like a lamb.

[63 : 11] To the slaughter. He has said. Nothing. When falsely accused. When flogged. Beaten. Mocked.

And crucified. But when he is forsaken by God. When he bears the punishment. Our sins deserve.

He will. Cry out. With a loud voice. He will scream. As he gives up. His spirit.

So hear. The weight. Of those words. Notice also. As Daniel comes up. And reads for us. After our next song.

How the world. Reacts. To the death. Of God's son. Before we hear those words.

[64 : 09] We're going to sing once more. We're going to sing the hymn. Man of sorrows. As we consider more. Man of sorrows. What a name. For the son of God who came.

Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah. What a savior. Bearing shame. And scoffing root. In my place. Condemned he stood. Sealed my pardon.

With his blood. Hallelujah. What a savior. Let us stand. As we sing. This song. Before Daniel comes. And reads for us. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Do. apply. Amen. Alleluia, God the Savior.

Wearing shame and scoffing root, In thy place on every street, Seal thy body with his blood.

[65 : 42] Alleluia, God the Savior. Healthy, helpless, lost, learned, Painless man of poverty, Sacrifice to set the stream, Alleluia, God the Savior.

He was lifted up to die, In his finish was his cry, Now in heaven's golden heart, Alleluia, God the Savior.

When he comes, our glorious King, All his hands are cold to bring, Then a new his song will sing, Alleluia, God the Savior.

From noon until about three in the afternoon, Darkness came over all the land.

About three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lemma sabachthani, Which means, My God, my God, Why have you forsaken me?

[67 : 44] When some of those standing there heard this, They said, He's calling Elijah. Immediately, one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, Put it on a staff, And offered it to Jesus to drink.

The rest said, Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him. And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up his spirit.

At that moment, The curtain of the temple was torn in two, From top to bottom. The earth shook, The rocks split, And the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died Were raised to life.

They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection, And went into the holy city, And appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him, Who were guarding Jesus, Saw the earthquake, And all that had happened, They were terrified, And exclaimed, Surely he was the Son of God.

Many women were there, Watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee, To care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, And Joseph, And the mother of Zebedee's sons.

[69 : 02] As evening approached, There came a rich man from Arimathea, Named Joseph, Who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, He asked for Jesus' body, And Pilate ordered that it be given to him.

Joseph took the body, Wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And placed it in his own new tomb, That he had cut out from the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance, To the tomb, And went away.

Mary Magdalene, And the other Mary, Were sitting there, Opposite the tomb. Thank you, Daniel.

Daniel. The curtain of the temple, Torn in two, Man and God, What sin had separated, Christ has brought together once more.

But not only that, The world responds, Doesn't it, To the death of Jesus. The earth shook. The rocks split.

[70 : 12] The tombs broke open. By the death of Jesus, The world gave up its dead To life.

That is the wonderful message of Easter, That we hold so dearly onto, Isn't it? That Jesus, By his death, Gives us Life.

That's why, As we look on, Even as the stone is rolled over, The tomb of this Galilean's grave, We are left confessing with the centurion, Surely, This man was the son of God.

And because he is the son of God, Who died this day, We, The sheep scattered, Who went our own way, Stand forgiven, Of everything, At the foot of his cross.

So let us close, By singing once more, Of the power of this cross. That by his death, He has brought us life.

[71 : 34] So let us stand once more, As we sing to God's praise together.ith for his Father, Amen, Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[76 : 14] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Please do have a seat just before we'll pray to close in just a minute.

But let me just say it is, it has been wonderful, if not humbling to focus this evening on Good Friday and the death that Jesus died for us.

But that is not the end, is it? And we look forward to rejoicing on Sunday morning as we celebrate that he rose from that grave.

And so I'd just like to really warmly invite you all, whether you're a regular here or not, please do come and join us on Easter Sunday. We'll be back here at 11 o'clock as we come and worship our risen Savior together.

[77 : 21] Thank you again for coming here this evening. Please do stick around if you can afterwards. And if you have any questions or would like to speak to anyone after the service, please do so. I'll come and speak to myself or anyone else who looks like they know what they're doing.

Let us pray as we close our time together. Father, we praise you for your great love for us in sending your Son.

That for our sake you made him to be sin who knew no sin. So that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

May we reflect on that wondrous mystery in the coming days. Before rejoicing on Sunday that he who died for us was not constrained to the grave but rose again.

That we might have everlasting life in him. To you, Father, Son and Spirit, be praise, honour and glory eternally. And be with each of us now and forevermore.

[78 : 33] Amen. Amen.