

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

In Our Place

PART

2

TITLE

Accused

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 26:57-27:2, 11-14



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Well, it's great to see your face and it's great to sing with you this morning. I hope that you're encouraged. Just a brief family note, invitation to pray, in particular, for my wife, Tabitha. Our son, Caleb, leaves tonight and he's going to head to bootcamp with the Marines, and so you can pray for him. We're super proud, super excited. He's excited. It's family, so sometimes when things happen to us, it's nice to share. You can pray for us, but in particular, for his mama.

When we see a person, whom we see a man or a woman sacrifice for the good of others and lay down his or her life for someone, we know that we're seeing something that's great. The person and everything about them may not be, but in that moment they are exercising, they are mirroring a kind of greatness that it just resembles the heart. There's something about it we just know this is unique and this is noble, and this is right. I remember years ago, there is probably 10 years ago, I was down South Carolina, Patriots Point. There's this little museum on the USS Yorktown and it simply is there to help us to remember people who have earned the Medal of Honor, and so you walk through and they have these little screens and there's just the face and you hit on their face and you can read the events that they were marked by courage, and valor, and sacrifice.

What's interesting is, walking through, reading the stories, simply imagining the sacrifices that these people went through in order to be honored in this way and it struck me is that even though the room was fairly full at the time that nobody was talking. The courage and sacrifice itself, it just spoke a lot of word. There's something memorable about those moments. We know that we're in the presence of something that was great, something that was noble. Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this to someone lay down his life for his friends. To lay down his life in the place of, on behalf of, and that said, nobody has ever lived a greater life in Jesus Christ, because Isaiah 53 says that he was pierced for in our place on behalf of our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and by his wounds we are healed.

I hope you can see there, it should have been us, it was our sins. It should've been our chastisement and it should've been our wounds, and yet he did it all in our place. What we're doing this month as we lead up to Easter is simply examining some of the really painful steps that Jesus endured in our place in order to bring us that peace. Last week, we looked to the fact that Jesus was truly betrayed, sadly betrayed in our place. What we want to look at here this morning is the fact that he was accused in our place. If you have a Bible, if you want to turn with me to Matthew 26, we'll also be in the very beginning of chapter 27, but we'll begin in Matthew 26:57. With every series, I always like to let you know why we're doing it.

There are some series and it's fairly obvious that it's an instruction on love, or it's an instruction on how to deal with with fear or anxiety and you think, "Well, what's the instruction here? What are you hoping to actually, that God's going to use this and do in our lives?" Let me tell you what it is. For those of you who know Christ as your Savior and Lord, whether you're in this room or at home, I pray that God uses this to fan the flame of faith in your heart that come Easter is that that flame will be brighter and hotter than it is today. That your admiration for Jesus, your love for him, your desire to live for him and honor him in every part of your

life, that it would grow and intensify simply by examining what he's done for you. I pray that you walk out of this room, and if there's nothing else you say you would say, "I am so grateful that Jesus did that in my place."

For those of you who are simply here, you may be a guest maybe not, maybe you've been here a long time, but you have not yet trusted Christ, perhaps some of you are simply examining who this Jesus is and why is it that people love to gather week to week and sing to him. What did he do? What did he accomplished? I pray for you that, not only do you see those things, but you become so compelled by his love for you that you would commit your life to Christ today. That's our hope, and so let me pray for us.

"Father in heaven, I ask that you would speak your weakness, would you create and generate just enthusiasm in our hearts, intrigue in our hearts, curiosity in our hearts, help us define what we read terribly interesting. We have to think about it, we have to sing about it, we have to talk about. We thank you, Jesus, that no one's ever loved us like you've loved us, and so would you create everything that's necessary in our heart, gratitude or belief, in order to bring us into a right relationship with you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."

In the first part, the first 56 verses, it's what leads up to where we were last time and that is that he is in the garden praying for us. Judas comes, he betrays him, he kisses him, and they lay hands on Jesus and they seize him. Starting in verse 57, this is what it says. "then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered, and Peter was following him at a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest. Going inside, he sat with the guards to see the end. Now the chief priest and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none.

Though many false witnesses came forward, at last two came forward and said, "This man said I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days." The high priest stood up and he said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so, but I tell you from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." Then they spit in his face and struck him, some slapped him saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ, who is it that struck you?" Only because it's not about Jesus being accused, we're going to skip a section where Peter then denies knowing Jesus. In chapter 27 verse 1, "When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people took council against Jesus to put him to death. They bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate, the governor. Then there's another break and in that break Judas, he recognizes now, he sees what's happening, that Jesus is being condemned, that he is likely going to die for this, and suddenly he wants to give the blood money back. It's refused and he's so overcome with shame and guilt that he goes out and he

hangs himself.

Then the story picks back up when Jesus is brought before Pilate verse 11, That Jesus stood before the governor and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.” But when he was accused by the chief priest, the elders he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” He gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. The first thing I want you to see today that will generate gratitude in your heart if you love him, is that Jesus endured the shame of being bound in our place.

It’s embarrassing to be bound by others, to be handcuffed, to be restricted and to have your freedoms restricted, to have somebody look at you and your hands and say, “We don’t trust those hands, so we’re going to bind those hands.” That’s an embarrassing thing. What it says in verse 57 is that they seized him, John’s gospel, not only do they put hands on him, it says they bound his hands, and so the idea here is that he was bound and led to Caiaphas then he goes to the trial, and then when it’s time to bring him to Pilate, apparently during the trial they let him free. But now when they’re transporting him to Pilate, they bind him and his hands once again. We don’t know if it was chains or ropes, we don’t know necessarily, but his hands were bound. What I want to encourage you to do was with sanctified imagination, I want to encourage you to imagine those hands.

I want to say sanctified imagination. What I mean by that is, don’t add words to the text, what it means is read the text, let the words confine what you can think what you should think and yet imagine those hands being bound. These were powerful hands, creator hands, sustainer hands, helpful hands, powerful hands, holy hands. These are hands that made bread and fed thousands of people out of generosity. These are hands that touched the body of a leper and healed him completely. These are hands that put his fingers on the eyes of a blind man and restored his sight. These are the hands, these hands that were bound, these are the hands that cast out demons from a boy. These were the hands that when parents saw Jesus and they thought, “You know, wouldn’t it be cool if little Johnny could just be touched by him and just a little pat on the head, and so they started bringing their children to allow him to touch them, that these are the hands that touched whether his hands or the head or the shoulder, to say, “I’m glad you’re here. I love you. We care for you, you’re importance. You’re young, but you’re important.”

It was these hands, powerful hands, holy hands, how were they bound? The only answer is he let them be bound. He let them be bound intentionally. One day, John the Baptist, he had some followers, he was a man whose job description from God was to prepare the soil, to prepare people’s hearts for the coming Messiah. He’s there and suddenly Jesus starts walking, and he sees them on the road and he gathers his own followers and he says, “Do you see that man? Behold! Look at him.” That’s hat it means. See that? You see? That is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

What Jesus did is just like one of the Old Testament sacrificial lambs. He allowed himself to be bound so that he would die for the sins of others. It doesn't take long in the Bible when you're reading it to see that we have a sin problem, that we rebelled against God and God still loved her so much and so he promised a rescuer who would come, a Redeemer who would come, and yet it would take quite some time in God's plan. Yet, there was a problem, there is a breach, there was a hole in the roof, more of our hard separation in that relationship. What God did, much like a tarp on a roof in a store, if there's a big hole in your roof, it may take time for someone to come fix it, so in the meantime you put a tarp over the roof. It's not permanent, it's temporary.

The Old Testament sacrificial system was God's temporary covering of the moral whole in order to establish and re-establish a relationship with him. God prescribed it. He said that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin, and so when we sinned against God something had to die. God said this. I'm going to allow it and prescribe it, that you, when you sin, that you would bring a lamb, an unblemished lamb. That lamb would be killed and given as a sacrifice in your place. You bring the lamb, what you're saying as it should be me, but I'm so thankful for your mercy that you're allowing this instead of me. Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment. He was the new roof to take the tarp away. He was the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

In the book of Leviticus, we're told that before the lamb was actually sacrificed, the lamb had to go through a time of inspection. In other words, you bring the lamb, and because it had no blemish, someone had to inspect him. The priest, these animals would line up at the doorway and the priest would examine to make sure that the lamb had no blemish. What is Jesus doing, he allows himself to be bound just like one of these lambs brought to trial for inspection. His life was his only defense, there wasn't a single two witnesses that could agree on any wrongdoing in his life, and finally the very last witness who inspected his life ends the examination, his name is Pilate and what did he say? "I find no guilt in him." No guilt. He endured the shame of being bound, but why did he do it?

This is the application. Let's consider the chains Jesus was breaking around us. They can only be broken if he allowed himself to be bound. You may not know this if you don't know Christ or if you do and you just wonder why is it like this. Maybe you need the Bible to give definition to what you experience and what you feel. The Bible says that each one of us are actually, we have these chains, these ropes that bind us. It says in three different places that we are a slave of something meaning it's almost as if we have chains wrapped around us, and that chain has one chain, and there's three things that take that chain and just walk us around.

The first is the ... you see here, it is the power of sin. Let me ask, have you ever sinned, don't answer yet. The answer is yes. Have you ever sinned, you felt so guilty and then you said, "You know what? I feel so guilty, I am never going to do that again." For a while, because the guilt and shame was so intense, you were pretty firm on ... like that kind of temptation for several days or weeks or months was nothing to you, just felt like nothing. Then all of a sudden, you find yourself back in that same sewer, and yet this time the guilt and shame is all the more. The Bible says that we have these chains wrapped around us that we are slaves to sin,

and when temptation comes, it's like the master just yanking us around and we find yourself yanked all over the place morally.

The second thing that he tells us is there is these changes, the verdict of God's law. Let me ask you, have you ever sinned in your life, maybe a long time ago and for whatever reason, it's one it's still fresh. It may be years and years ago, but if you say, "Hey, what's the sin worst than you ever committed?" Like your mind just goes back to maybe one thing, "If I had one mulligan, and I could only have one, that's the one that I would get rid of."

Yet, every time you come to the Bible, you find that the Bible keeps talking about those things and every time you see and hear the Bible, talking about those things saying that what we did was wrong, we feel like the Bible is declaring guilt over and over and over. It's like a verdict of guilt, guilt, guilty, guilty. The Bible actually says that one day when we stand before God, there will be a witness in that courtroom of the witness is God's word. That witness will be unbiased and unemotional, and for the sinner, that witness will simply say, "Guilty. Guilty."

There's another chain that he intended to break, and that was the fear of death. Hebrews 2:15 says that, "Each one of us," it says that, "We are slaves to the fear of dying." Have you ever wished that you could escape death but the older you get, the more convinced that you're not going to? That you really are going to die and the older you get the more fearful it gets, it becomes to you that that is really going to happen? None of us want to die. When Jesus came and when he was bound and then later he was crucified and then later he was resurrected from the dead, when he rose from the dead, he extended an invitation to us and this is what the imitation is. He said, if you believe in me, in him, trust in his accomplishments, in his death and resurrection, several things would take place. Number one, he says, we will be born again. We would get a new nature and that nature over time would grow to not want to sin.

We'd have new desires over time. He would pit his holy spirit within us to help us to say no to temptation, so that we would no longer have to be a slave to sin. Romans 6 says, "Now, you're a slave to righteousness." Not only that, but this law that's against this, when we're guilty, this same law ... when we trust Christ, he forgives us of our sin and it is the most remarkable thing it's called justification. It's where Jesus himself gives us his righteousness. Now, what that means is that for those of you who are in Christ, meaning you're a Christian, when you stand before God Almighty in judgment, there will still be a witness there. It will still be the word of God, but instead of hearing guilty the word of God will say righteous, innocent. Not only that, but when we trust Christ, he says that he gives us the gift of eternal life, so that the very thing that we fear in death actually becomes the doorway to bring us into God's presence in heaven.

Colossians chapter 2 says it this way. He says that, "You were dead in your trespasses," dead. You are slaves to sin, you are slaves to shame and guilt, you are slaves to condemnation, you were slaves to death. He says that, "God made alive together with him," that's together with Christ. "having forgiven us all our trespasses,

by canceling the record of debt that stood against us,” that’s that law, that’s that verdict of the law that says, “Guilty, guilty.” He says that Jesus took that law, what do you do with it? He set aside, nail you to the cross. When I personally sit and I read these stories, I read them all the time. When I imagine Jesus’ hands, those hands being bound, I feel a particular pain. Sometimes I feel anger. Sometimes I feel like Peter, I just want to grab a sword and stop it from happening. But oh how we needed him to be bound that we could be set free.

The second thing I want you to see is that Jesus endured the indignity of injustice in our place. It’s a degrading thing to be treated unjustly. Every one of us, because we’re created in the image of God, when we’re treated unjustly it feels like we’re de-humanized. It’s not right. When you look at things like slavery and human trafficking, Third World children, slave labor, only a seared conscience can look at those things and remain unmoved. Only a seared conscience could see a corrupt courtroom and not be emotionally moved to say, “That’s wrong.” The reason is because God tells us that he’s written his law, including justice on our heart. We want the scales to be even, to be equal, to be impartial before the trial begins. We need to be, and we say it’s wrong when they’re not.

That one who wrote that law on your heart is Jesus, your creator. Just imagine how unjustly the author of justice was treated. The law in this culture at this time said that trials had to be done during the day, so the people who come and watch and ensure that it was impartial, they welcome the scrutiny of other people’s eyes. They also couldn’t be done on a holiday when people would be traveling, when people would have friends over, when they would be distracted. Yet, what happened with Jesus’ trial? Verse 57 says, he was seized at night. They bring him to Caiaphas, the high priest, and notice what’s already there, the scribes and the elders had gathered.

This is the opposite of how we do things. In America, normally we wait for somebody to commit a crime before we pick the jury, but not them. No, they already gathered. They were waiting, waiting for him to be brought. This was at Passover, a holiday, people were distracted. It was in the middle of the night and they condemn him to death before dawn. Think about the due process. The law for the Jews said that the jury had to be impartial, but notice what this jury was doing. Not only were they gathered, they were the ones seeking false testimony against Jesus. Just imagine sitting in the back of a courtroom and suddenly the trial begins, the jury stands up, comes down, prosecutes the defendant then returns to the jury box and say, “We find the defendant guilty.” This is what happened to Jesus.

Then there’s these witnesses. The law of the Jews said that witnesses had to be in total agreement, and if they weren’t then their testimonies were expunged from the trial. They couldn’t find two people to agree on anything that he’d done wrong, finally, they find two people to say, “You know what? I have no idea what it means, but one time he was walking by and he looked at the temple and he says, “See that temple right there? I can knock it down in three days, rebuild it.” He is speaking about his own body that was about to be crucified, but on the third day would rise from the dead, and so they ask him, really asked him anything. “Have you no answer to make?” Jesus is quiet. His silence was irritating to Caiaphas, and so he gets a little bit more

intense he goes, “All right, listen. I adjure you.”

It's like, put your hand on the Bible, put your hand on the heart of God, make a promise under law, under oath, I adjure you by the living God, what does he say? “Are you the Christ, The Son of God?” What does Jesus say? He says, “You have said so.” Some of us is saying, “well, that's a weird way to answer it.” Mark's gospel actually says the words, “I am,” and then he gives this sentence. Why does Matthew continue and he does it three different times say that Jesus said, “You have said so.” You remember when Judas was at the table, he says, “I want you to know, one of you is going to betray me.” Each of the disciples, they begin asking, “Is it I, Lord? Is it me?”

Eventually, he gets down and the last one left is Judas. Judas has already gone to the chief priest, he has already accepted 30 pieces of silver, he has already established a time when he's going to try to betray him. He knows who the betrayer is, and Judas comes to Jesus and he says, “Is it I Lord?” Instead of saying, “You know it is, yes,” what does he say? “You have said so.” The second time is here with Caiaphas. Caiaphas says, “I adjure you by living God, are you the Christ, the Son of God?” “You have said so.”

The third time is with Pilate. He's about to be brought to Pilate, Pilate is going to ask him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus says, “You have said so.” You have said so was Jesus' way of saying yes, while at the same time calling attention to what they already knew. It's like saying, “Look, something in you already knows the answer to that question. You fear it is so, you fear what it will mean to you if it is so, and so you ask defensively.” Then Jesus says something that we should consider. He says, “Yes and you know it's true,” but then he says something else. He says, “I tell you, from now on you will see.”

I want to spend just a moment asking this question. What will they see in particular, because what they see is what we will see? Let's consider this for a second. Let's consider what we will see. Let's consider what Jesus said we will see, because what he said to them applies to us. Notice what it says once again in verse 64. He says, “I tell you, from now on you will see,” and this is what he says you're going to see. “You're going see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” They hear this and they say blasphemy. Why would they say that? This is why. Because they knew Daniel chapter 7. In chapter 7 of Daniel, there's two verses, 14 and 15, I believe, and this is what it says. It says that, “When the Son of God, the Christ comes, he has finally sent, the promised one comes to the Earth,” he says, “One of the titles he'll go by is not Son of God but it will be Son of Man.”

In other words, Son of God and Son of Man are two titles that describe two unique natures of Jesus that enables him to mediate between man and God. He is fully God and fully man. He knows what it's like to be God, and he knows what it's like to be man, and so one of his titles would be Son of Man. In that passage, it says that, “The Son of Man will be given dominion, glory and a kingdom that will never end.” Now, notice what happens. They ask him, “Are you,” he used the first title, “the Son of God?” How does he respond? “You will see the Son of Man.” Now, all of a sudden, they're like, “Wait a minute, I know where he's going with this.”

This is what he saying to them and what he is saying to us. He says, “Today, it may appear that I have no glory and no dominion and no kingdom, but one day you will see.”

Today, people wonder. These Christians, they talk about the glory of Jesus and the power of Jesus, and the kingdom of Jesus, and he is the King of Kings. We look around we think, “Where is his kingdom? I don’t see it. I don’t see his palace. Where is this righteous rule? Where is the peace that’s supposed to mark his reign? Where is it?” Jesus says, “You will see it. You will see it.” He goes on and he says, “Today,” this is where it’s seated. He said, “Today, I am standing and you are seated and you’re my judge, but one day, you are going to see something else. You’re going to see that you are standing before my throne and I will be your eternal judge.” Still today, we find people, some of you may be or doing that right now, you’re making a determination on the merits of Jesus. You’re wondering if it’s worthwhile for him to be part of your life. You’re wondering if his accomplishments, if his claims are worthy of acceptance. You’re sitting and you’re making determinations and judgment about him.

One day, we will stand before Jesus Christ, who will be seated on his throne, and on that day, we will not be wondering about his merits and his dominion, and his glory, and his kingdom, but we will be judged for ours. He says, “Today, you declare me a blasphemer. It means that God the father must be really unhappy with me, and I’m going to be bound for hell, but I want to know something, the next time you see me, I’m going to be seated at the right hand of power, and I’m not going to be coming from hell to visit you, I’m going to on that be coming from heaven.”

Well, for these individuals, they simply did not believe and as a result of that, that led them to judge Jesus and spit in his face and slap him and strike him and mock him. The question is, what about you? There’s no room for apathy here. Why I encourage you to consider what we will see is the flip side of that is and then live accordingly. To live anticipating the day when you will stand before Christ, are you ready? Are you ready?

The last thing I want you to see is that Jesus endured the disgrace of being accused in our place. It’s a humiliating thing to be accused isn’t it? Even if we’re guilty, we don’t like it. Even if we know that we were wrong, somebody points their finger or they poke us in the chest, “You did that,” we don’t like it. This is especially the case when we know that we’re innocent. All right, if somebody robs a bank and we were on vacation somewhere else, we know we didn’t do it and yet we were still accused, a measure of anger and defensiveness rises within our heart, we need to defend our honor, “I didn’t do that.”

The New Testament goes out of its way to speak of the innocence, the moral perfection of Jesus. Peter writes in two different places of his letter. First, that Jesus is like a lamb without blemish or spot, and then he says, “He committed no sin, and neither was deceit found in his mouth.” Why does he say this? He could say, “He committed no sin,” why is this other clause needed? This is why, I think. Peter was straining to help us to see how morally perfect he was. There’s a lot of sins that needs some calculation in order to pull off. They need some resources, sometimes they need another person involved, but not with your mouth. You can sin with

your mouth like that.

He says, "You want to know how morally perfect Jesus was? This is how perfect. He never even said a word that was wrong." This is remarkable. Yet, when morning came, verse 1 and 2 of chapter 27 says that, "They declared him guilty of blasphemy. They said he needed to die. They bound him and they led him to Pilate." Pilate clearly heard some things. They get to his house and they said, "Hey, we want you to judge this guy, we think he deserves death." He says, "What did he do wrong?" They say, "Look, we wouldn't have brought him to you if he was innocent." He's like, "Something's not right here." He leave them all outside except Jesus. He brings Jesus in, and if you're Pilate, there's a mob outside and they want you to kill him, you bring him in, what's the first question you ask? "What did you do?"

The Pilate has clearly heard some things about Jesus. He's heard some claims, and so he says, "Let me ask you something, intrigued about something, are you the king of the Jews?" What does Jesus say? "You have said so. I am and you know that I'm different, but you wonder what that means for your control and your reign." Well, he brings him back out and he goes, "Because I don't see anything wrong with this guy," and so this is when they start to accuse him in front of Pilate. It says that Jesus, when he was accused, notice he says he gave no answer. Why did he do this? We're almost done, so pay attention very carefully. Jesus was so committed to fulfilling every part of the law in our place, that one of those things required him to be quiet when he was accused. We say, "Why?"

The Bible says in Romans 3, "That one day, when we stand before God in judgment," it says, "In that moment, every mouth will be closed. There'll be no arguing with God, there'll be blaming other people, there'll be no blaming circumstances. When we see the holiness and the glory of Jesus Christ standing in front of us, we're going to see somebody who is wholly different than us and we're not going to argue with him about it, we will be quiet. What did Jesus do? In our place, he received all the accusations, and at that trial he said nothing. His mouth was closed intentionally.

There came a terrible time when our sin was placed upon him. Sometimes you might even say, "Hey, he died for me." Sometimes we think about it like it's a metaphor, like "Yeah, that happened, and God just credits that to our account." But the Bible talks about different words when it talks about Jesus with our sin. He talks about he carried our sin. He also says that he became it. 2nd Corinthians 5:21 says, "For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin," to be sin. That means it wasn't just on his shoulder or on his brow or in his hand, it means it was in him, he became it.

Just imagine just for a moment, the accusations that could have been made in that moment, that horrible moment when Jesus became the sin of the world. Someone could have stood up and said, "This Jesus is an idolater who worships creation instead of the creator. This Jesus curses and profanes the name of the one true God. This Jesus is arrogant. He trembles not at God's word, but in fact redefines what God has said is right and wrong. He is boastful, self-absorbed, irritable, impatient, envious, jealous. This Jesus before you is

a murderer. He's a violent man, a lawless man, a brutal man, a wife beater, a child abuser. This Jesus is an adulterer. He's a prostitute, a pimp, a trafficker, a stripper. Pornography is his pill. He is immoral and lustful and committed to follow every [debased 00:40:12] sexual urge that flickers in his heart. This Jesus is a thief who robs people's property and dignity, exploiting the young and the old, the weak and the poor."

"This Jesus is the self-righteous hypocrite, who stacks of for everyone else but who lives morally defiled behind closed doors. This Jesus is a liar and a gossip who burns down people's lives with his tongue. This Jesus is full of racist hatred, indifferent towards the suffering of other people and even carrying out atrocities to people, because their skin is darker or lighter than his own. This Jesus is full of greed, he would rather have his bread rot than share some of it with someone in need. This Jesus is unforgiving, unloving, ungodly, ungrateful and unrelenting in his rebellion against God."

What I hope that you can feel this morning is this. While carrying and becoming our sin, it would have all been true. He carried it, he became it, and then he died for it all. He was buried and on the third day Jesus rose from the dead, extending to us an invitation to trusting and believe in him and confess in his Lord, and Romans 8:1 tells us what happens to those who do. He says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." No condemnation. The accusations that should be lodged against you were lodged against him and therefore, no one is ever going to condemn you before God. It's the most amazing news ever. It should've been us.

Let me encourage you the few last applications. First, let's put our faith in Jesus. Some of us are like the Sanhedrin. These people were religious, they went to church, and yet they were lost. Everyone thought that they were good people, and yet their heart was far from God. They knew Jesus was unique, but when pushed between Christ and being in control of their life and their destiny, they chose control. Some of us are more like Pilate who represents a distracted life. One day I'll think about that kind of life. He knows Jesus is innocent, and yet other things seem more important to him in the moment. What about you? Would you trust Christ right now? Would you pray to him right now? "God, I'm a sinner. I see it, I know it, I admit it. I can't save myself, but I trust you. I trust your son. I believe he died and rose again. He will forgive you, justify you, give you eternal life. He's such a free.

Two last things for those of us who are believers. First, let's see our sin upon his shoulders, that always grieves me, how many believers are overcome with guilt over things long passed that have already been paid for? The happiest Christians I know are not the sinless ones because we're all sinful. They're the ones who see their sin is paid for in full by the precious blood of Jesus. Whatever it is that you say that's my worst sin, I want you to imagine it on Jesus, because he paid for it already.

The last thing is let's share our hope with others. We should look for opportunities to share our hope. We should look for opportunities to bless your neighbors. We should look for opportunities to bless our city and there's something right now in front of us as a church family, we do this three times a year, it's called City

Serve, where we organize and we go and we find ways to bless the city. Amazing team here at Providence, who has put together a number of opportunities no matter where you're at in terms of COVID and isolation, whether you need to be isolated or not, there's a way for you to participate in this. What happens is this. When we serve our city in this way, it leads people to ask the question, why are doing this? And it gives us the opportunity to say, "Well, because someone did something in our place." I urge you, would you participate with us? Would you engage in blessing people around you to share the hope that we have in Christ?

Let me pray for us. "Father in heaven, I pray for those who are considering trusting you. Would you lead them to that place of longing to do so? I pray for those who already have. God, would you fan the flame of gratitude and worship and adoration in our heart for Jesus to help us to see that every day is to be lived unto him. Jesus, for the things that you've done for us in our place, we will forever say thank you. We love you and we sing to you now in response, because we believe. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."



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