

John 18

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Date: 21 January 2018

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. Good morning. Now we're welcome to the service this morning. For those who perhaps are not visiting but are feeling you with us, a special welcome to yourselves.

There's a cup of tea and coffee at the end of the service. Please stay if you're able to. Evening service from 6 to 7. This evening, James chapter 4, the first few verses of that passage. So that's 6 to 7. It is an hour and that's to encourage young folks to come out with their parents and the parents to bring the young people out. So the YF meets at half past 7 afterwards also. And in the course of the week, other than the normal things, which are the ladies' Bible study, Rotary Recovery, and the prayer meeting, the usual places, the usual times, there'll be a session meeting tomorrow at the matts at half past 7.

And there will be a Christianity Explored meeting the 1st of 7, which will be in the Hotel Hebrides dining area. At half past 7.

[1 : 0 1] And all are welcome to come along to that. Anthony spoke briefly about that last Sunday. And Anthony's there. So if anybody wants to speak to Anthony about that, or Kirsty, then you can speak to them and they can give you an idea of what's involved in it.

But all are welcome. Those who are Christians, those who are not, those who are exploring, those who have been on the road for a long time, and I would warmly encourage you to consider it. The services next Sunday will be at the usual times, 11 o'clock, and that will be taken by Mr Gordon McLeod. And we'll be in the US next weekend, and that will be in the moderate ship. And we'll have to do supply in a couple of months. And the evening service will be at half past 6 o'clock, and that will be led by Dom McSweeney, and that will be our gallery service. Two more things, one, three more things, four more things. The congregational meal will be on Saturday, 3rd of February. We had one about this time last year.

[2 : 0 6] It's about a week this time of the year, so we're going to have a congregational meal on the 3rd of February at 6, and we'll give more details of that over the next few weeks. WFM are looking to see whether any ladies in the congregation still have their wedding dresses for a fundraising idea.

I should read these things before I stand up here. The mind boggles. If you do or know of someone who does, please speak to Peggy, Mary, or Shona, and the mystery will be revealed.

Two more things. The prayer for Harris prayer meeting, that's the thing that followed on from the faith mission, tent mission, that's from 7 to half past 8, this Thursday in Surrey Scottsville.

As you go in, there'll be signs directing you to the room. That is honouring. The final intimation is to intimate the death, the passing, and the funeral of the late, Mr. Dougold MacArthur of Dornoch. Dougold was the uncle of Ina and Alistair, and uncle by marriage of Mary Jane. The funeral service will be at 11 o'clock on Wednesday at the 24th in the Church of Scotland, and the burial will be at Luskin Femme thereafter.

[3 : 2 9] So, please, if you're able to attend that, to pay your respects and to join together and worship with the family, please do so. Bless and unite our hearts in that prayer.

Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the stay.

We thank you for a new opportunity to come together and to worship you. We thank you that we come to the God, the one true God, and the God that we can know.

You have not remained afar off from us and hid yourself from us. But, Lord, we thank you that you've revealed yourself to us and you are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We thank you that as we open your word, we see that revelation, that truth is given to us, that you are our Father. You are the one that we are called to come to in prayer and address as our Father, the one who cares for us, the one who looks over us, the one who loves us.

[4 : 45] And, Lord, we thank you that we know the reality of that love and we can be assured of that love as we look to Jesus. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, Jesus, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

We thank you for Jesus. Lord Jesus, we thank you for coming into this world. And for living for us and dying for us and for rising from the dead. And promising that resurrection life to everyone who will look to him.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that we are able to draw near to you. We thank you that you understand us. We thank you that there's nothing that we go through in life that you have not felt.

You have wept with those who wept at a grave site. And you rejoice for those who rejoice at a wedding. You have held the children in your arms.

You have worked in the workshop. And Lord, we praise you and we thank you for all that you have done. That you are our great high priest. That you are the one who sympathises with all of our griefs.

[5 : 59] And you are the one, Lord, who has saved us. We thank you for that salvation that we remember each time we come together. That the one who knew no sin became sin for us.

That we might become righteous in him. And we ask, Lord, that each of us would look to Jesus. And Holy Spirit, we pray that you would be active in this place and in each of our hearts.

Showing us our sin. And drawing us to Jesus. Drawing us to the Father. We cannot come to the Father except through Christ.

But we thank you that when we come to and through Jesus we are assured that we are received and adopted and loved eternally. So, Lord, we seek to draw near to you.

We ask that you would bless us in this day. We thank you for the resurrection. Every Lord's day we remember. The first day of the week. The day that Jesus rose. We thank you as we often sing because he lives we also live.

[7 : 01] And we confess tomorrow and every tomorrow that he gives us. And, Lord, we pray for all who will gather this week. Those who grieve. Those who will give thanks for one who was much loved.

We ask, Lord, that you would be comforting. That you would be upholding and strengthening all who are in sorrow. And we ask, Lord, that as we open your word that you would meet with us and speak to us and draw many people to yourself.

We thank you that we're able to draw near to you in this place today. And we ask, Lord, that you would be near to many who have no such freedom to be able to join together.

We think of the church in China especially as the government tries to close down churches violently and systematically. So we hear of those who suffer and those who are in prison for 13, 14 years because they sat as we sit.

We pray, Lord, for our brothers and sisters in Christ and we ask that you would be near to them and that you would help them. That you would watch over them and as the government tries to close the church time we pray, Lord Jesus, that you would build your church up.

[8 : 17] We pray, my Lord, that you would continue with us, that you would take away all of our sin. Open our hearts, we pray. Be with those who would love to be here with us but who are unable to be here today.

Those who are working, those who are sick, those who are struggling with different things in life and we ask, Lord, that you would meet each one at the point of their need and we thank you, Lord, for hearing our prayers for those who have been off for some weeks and are back with us today.

Bless them, we pray, as we ask that you would bless us and bless every congregation in this place and across the nations that meets together to worship the risen Christ.

We probably ask these things in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come out, please? Coming out. If I could say to all the congregation that there's quite a lot of work to do still at the church, there's a lot of outside work to do, my friend, this week and I know there's going to be people down there working outside every day this week so if you can spare some time put on your thermals and get down there and we'll see what we can get on.

Boys and girls, there's going to be something on the screen I wonder if you could tell me what it is. You'll need to come round and have a wee look. I hope somebody never said cute.

[9 : 45] Tell me, boys and girls, what's that? Rat! It's a rat. Can you see the other picture, please? Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat!

Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! That's not so cute, is it? Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! Rat!

Rat! Rat! So that's a rat! Rat! Rat! Rat! Does anybody like rats? Put your hand up if you like rats. Rat! Rat! Jono and John Roddy. You both like rats. So how many pet rats do you have? Zero. Zero. Do you not, if they're cute and you like them so much, do you not go to school with a wee pet rat in your pocket like that and just stroke it during the class?

I think it's you. You think you should? You try that. See how you got it. Tell us next week. Does anyone have a rat that sleeps beside you in the bed?

[10:47] Yuck! That's what they said. Yuck! Yuck! Cathy Ann's just about having a breakdown at the back there at the thought of it. Why am I talking about rats?

I'll tell you why I'm talking about rats. Because just over the last few weeks, shh shh shh shh shh, at night time, in the ceiling, at the wall, I was hearing this.

and so up in the eaves, just above where our bedroom is, there's at least one, there's definitely more, of these things.

I caught one already, but there's still cheese and chocolate disappearing, which tells me that there are more of these creatures following me around this place.

Now, boys and girls, tell me, what am I going to do about these things? Put them in a cage. Put them in a cage. Put them in a cage. That's quite a good idea. It's quite tricky though.

[12:04] Put them to the cats. Put them to the cats. The lazy cats. Lazy cats sitting on the window. Rats tiptoeing about upstairs.

I could give them to the cats. I could put them in a cage. I could throw them out of the house if I could. Yes. Get an axe and chop them.

Get an axe and chop them. No, let's maybe just stop this here. Katrina? Put cheese in a cage. Put cheese in a cage. Yep. I could try and get them in there.

All these are good answers. Well, most of them are good answers. But the one thing I have to try and do is I have to try and get them out. I have to try and get them out of the house, out of the eaves, get them away.

Why is that? Well, why do I need to get them out? Because they can hurt you. Because they can hurt you, yeah. Any of the back benches over here?

[13:05] You can bite your fingers. You can bite your fingers, yeah. I wouldn't like that. Because that teeth can bite through concrete. Very, very sore. So, the rats, they have to go.

You might think they look cute. There's one person in the congregation not here today, who thinks they're very cute. I'm glad she's not here because I thought she might shout things out. But, you might think rats look a bit cute.

First picture looks a wee bit cute. But, I think they can't, I think we don't throw them at all, they'll crack. Oh! Yeah, we won't throw them at all, they'll crack, yeah.

But, the thing is, they might look quite cute like that. You might think they want to stroke them.

Callum doesn't, I can see on his face. But, they're dangerous. They can eat through all kinds of stuff.

They cause lots and lots of damage. And, they've got disease. They've got horrible, dirty stuff. And, wherever they go, they take it. So, I have to, yeah, so I have to get them out.

[14:13] I have to get them out. They're a big problem. I have to get them out. Now, boys and girls, tell me, tell me. I know what she told about. Yeah, we'll try and get them out.

What's, what's our big problem in us? Not rats. But, what's our big heart problem? Heart problem. Caitlin. Sin. And, you know, sometimes, sin, you might think, it's, it's just harmless.

Sometimes, you might think sin is very attractive. Have you ever, tell me this, tell me the truth. Tell me the truth. Tell me the truth. Because you might think, sin, no, sin, I have nothing to do with sin.

But, there's some things, and sin, it's attractive to us. Have your mum and dad ever said to you, have you ever said to your mum and dad, can I get a chocolate biscuit?

And they said, no, you've already had one. And you know that God wants you to obey your mum and your dad. And so, then you're sitting there, and you're looking at a jar full of chocolate biscuits, and there's nobody watching.

[15:22] Yeah. Jono, he's got a laugh in. No, it isn't. And you think to yourself, I know, I know, and you might think to yourself, I know what I'm supposed to do.

I know I'm not supposed to have a chocolate, but I know how delicious they taste. And so you take it. Well, I know you have to make a chain of a spoon on there, and then you put a rat on there, and then, what?

Wait. Michael's still, Michael's trying to figure out how to get rid of the rats. But boys and girls, listen to me for one more minute. One more minute.

You're sitting there, you see the chocolate biscuits, you think, I know I'm not supposed to do anything, but nobody's watching. So you put your hand in the jar, you take it, you eat it, it's delicious, but, that's sin.

So boys and girls, our big problem is sin. And we have to ask God to help us get it right out, right out, and right away, because nobody else can help us do that.

[16:44] So let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for today. We thank you that you love us. We thank you that you save us from sin when we ask you. So we ask Lord that you would come into each one of our hearts, take our sin away, and make our hearts pure and clean.

And we ask this indeed as well. Amen. Turn your Bible, sweet, now to John chapter 18. John chapter 18, and we continue in our studies in this chapter, and we read from verse 28 through to the end of the chapter, verse 40.

John 18 and verse 28. This is God's Word. Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness, the Jews did not enter the palace.

They wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, what charges are you bringing against this man? If he were not a criminal, they replied, we would not have handed him over to you.

Pilate said, take him yourselves, and judge him by your own law. But we have no right to execute anyone. The Jews objected. This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled.

[18:10] Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, are you the king of the Jews? Is that your own idea, Jesus asked, or did others talk to you about me?

Am I a Jew? Pilate replied. It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it that you have done? Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world.

If it were, my servants would fight and prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place. You are a kingdom, said Pilate.

Jesus answered, you are right in saying, I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of the truth listens to me.

What is truth? Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover.

[19:20] Do you want me to release the king of the Jews? They shouted back, no, not him. Give us Barabbas. Now Barabbas had taken part in the rebellion.

Amen. And may God bless our freedom of his word to us. Father, Father, and our leaders and freedom. Father, in this the group you are not sure to missSS48. The sóys of all agreement towards the Hajime a and OYKUS ■■■■■ wealthy person above 69

As will the end of the page for free But, as will the rest fail and from law.

So this is for the Saint Peter. So he is this haha.

So his procedure to do therefore is going to get into a routine.

[21:40] Please visit Empaths 2 Sels ofaviina www. metres thrusts.■■ Save Empaths 2-200■■■■■ sah niet saying, geography dark

You twelve of the sevenfold Jeremiah Suzanus of Revelation B God bless you.

A momentint I pray with I begin to discuss theasilaphs once that was promised me And I listen to this again I stand for creative forgiveness And when I keep laughing my words I use these evenings And that is how I start to write la know your action now I take the same sort of humility The wind can be given.

Mostly bees are made today. We are living in a lifetime, and without grateful.

We have no longer come back ■ tend to invest in giving us praise.

[25:27] Hoyens Biosen is and of the glory.

See how many will come in again. We have a situation happening in theaters, we always have to look at them.

They■■ the mind and sailors Mind ■izad. run is Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We sing again to God's grace from Psalm 23. And we sing the first.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We sing again to God's grace from Psalm 23.

[27 : 50] And we'll sing the first two stanzas from Psalm 23. I'll read the first three. The Lord is my shepherd, I will not want. He makes me die to lie in pastures.

He will be the quiet waters by my soul. He doth restore again, and he to walk with me, with different paths of righteousness, even for his own name's sake. E'er though I walk in death's dark veil, yet will I fear none ill.

For thou art with me, and thy rod and staff become first. So we'll sing the first two stanzas of Psalm 23. To God's grace. Achíveis! Stanzas of Psalm 3λ Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[30 : 25] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. just as we come back to god's world let's pray for me our heavenly father we thank you for your word thank you for the word and bless jesus and we pray that as we open this chapter and as we look again at quite probably words that are very familiar to us we pray that we would lose none of their impact because of familiarity we ask lord that you would speak to us in power will be spirit help me in speaking help each one of us as we listen and as we respond and lord we pray not just for ourselves here we pray for the children too we thank you for them we remember jesus called to the disciples in the past to let the little children come to me don't hinder them and lord we ask that as the teachers in the sunday school speak to them simply about the message of the gospel the good news about jesus we pray that they would have ears to hear and that their soft young hearts would be responsive to all that is taught to them we thank you for new young life that's come into the community even this week and lord we pray uh for aileen we pray for ral we pray for alana and kelly and for uh little baby roberts who came into the world this week we ask your blessing upon them when we ask your blessing upon him that he would grow up to know you to trust you to walk with you to glorify you in the way that he lives we commit and to you lord give thanks for him and be given thanks for all of the children bless them we pray enable us to point them to take them to jesus and we ask these things in jesus name and for jesus sake amen when i look out into the congregation just now i can see even from a cursory glance that there's quite a number of you myself included who struggle to see things clearly some of us are short-sighted like me so i can take my glasses off i can no longer make eye contact with anyone in the back row i need the glasses to be able to see at any kind of distance and there's others who are long-sighted and you're fine looking at a distance but the second someone asks you to to look in the bible then the glasses have to go on because we struggle at times with our vision and when we realize that we're struggling with our vision we go to the opticians we get checked out we get given glasses we get given contacts or whatever we put in and the first time we put them on or put them in it's like a whole new world everything that was so blurry and everything that was so difficult to to see becomes sharp and crisp the thing about glasses and contacts is that you have to put them on every day every morning when i get up i can't see and not until i i get the glasses and i put them on do i have any kind of clarity to be able to go forward into the day and just as every morning i pick up my glasses every morning we all have to pick up the bible because without the bible we don't see clearly we don't see the world clearly the beauty of creation and yet the reality of sin and fallenness without the bible we don't see the

truth about ourselves and the fact that we have this problem of sin that we so often play with and dabble with but actually we need to just get it out like the rats on the eaves and when we don't have the bible we're not day by day in the bible we don't see jesus clearly and we need to see jesus clearly because how we see him here today impacts not just about the way that we're going to live our day and the way that we're going to live out the years that we have in time but how we see jesus today in time impacts on eternity and it's the bible that day by day brings us back to the reality of eternity in this world we are so quick to to just get into the rut of thinking that this is all it is that is eternity there is eternity there is a heaven that we are called to gain in christ there is a hell that we

are called to shine as we turn to jesus matthew 10 jesus says in verse 32 whoever acknowledges me before others i will also acknowledge before my father in heaven but whoever disowns me before others i will disown before my father in heaven how we see jesus in time what we say about jesus in time echoes into eternity and today in john 18 uh we are looking at we're looking at two people or two a group of people and an individual uh who are making judgments about christ they're seeing jesus they're face to face with jesus and they are called to make judgments about jesus the reality was and the reality is that these same men that stood before jesus on that day in john 18 will one day the same men stand before the the judgment seat of christ so we look at john 18 and it looks like they're in judgment of christ and yet what a thought to consider that these same men who stood in this position will one day stand at the bar of the judgment seat of christ looking at the same jesus that they made judgments about and called to be crucified and the thing that we have to remember day by day and week by week is that we too will one day stand before the judgment seat of christ and what we have said about jesus and what we have believed about jesus will be fixed for eternity so what are we saying about jesus today and what were they saying about jesus on that day let's look at the text we we follow on in the passage from uh verse 28 now for those who haven't been here in weeks previous uh we can see uh the story even if we glance back just through the verses previously jesus was arrested by the soldiers and the officials he's led by judas um into the garden where he's arrested he's questioned by the high priest annas he's then delivered to caiaphas

[39 : 22] and then uh he is um brought by the the jews to pontius pilate and in between times we've seen find peter and that catastrophic failure and yet the grace that we know that is extended to him so we pick up today at verse 28 where we see the jews dealing with jesus so we'll look first of all the jews and how they make judgments about christ we'll take a fair bit of time on that and then we'll look at pontius pilate and how he makes judgments about jesus and what he says about jesus and finally if time allows uh then we will look at um barabbas and not so much what what barabbas said because we don't hear what barabbas said we'll think about how he must have thought um as he made judgments and considered uh the person and all that was going on in the life of christ so first of all we look at the jews verse 28 then the jews led jesus from caiaphas to the palace of the roman government by now it was early morning and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the jews did not enter the palace that's the palace of pontius pilate they wanted to be able to eat the passover now it's helpful here to to just think about the details in the time of what was going on here everything that was happening was happening under the cover of darkness everything that we're reading of here was happening as a as a dick as a thick darkness was was enveloping the whole scene all this was going on very early in the morning when they arrived at pontius pilate's pilate's house it was before six o'clock in the morning one of the commentators johnson said everything about this trial begun under the cover of darkness and continuing into the early light of dawn simply reeks of injustice everything that was going on here was jarring against their system everything that was going on here was against every procedure and every code that they had carefully formulated and the likelihood was that this was all planned this was all orchestrated the likelihood is that they had already been in discussions with pilot they had already made appeals and overtures to pilot as to how things would go not very easy to get a meeting at 6 a.m. with the top man in that region unless he's warned already so likely at 6 a.m.

so likely at 6 a.m. pontius pilate was expecting that knock on the door so it's very probable that all the timings and the details of this had been carefully worked out but jesus had a plan and as you get closer and closer to the crucifixion of jesus you get that sense that dark sense of of a growing almost drunken giddy excitement as they tried to secure this conviction the conviction against jesus as they looked for that permission to be able to crucify him the point is the jews had a plan so let's pause here to remember as we did last week god had a bigger plan since chapter 12 of john's gospel jesus has been said the hour has come the time has come for the son of man to be glorified and what we see here was the plan of salvation gruesome as it was dark as it was it was progressive and this reminds me of joseph remember the story of joseph remember all that he suffered joseph and his brothers so jealous of him ganging up on him on that day they had a plan they wanted him gone they wanted him out of their hair they wanted him away from their father and so one day when they see the opportunity they take hold of him they rob him of his coat they sell him off into slavery they cover his coat in blood and tell his father that and their father that he was dead and the brothers guilt in that story in joseph and genesis the brothers guilt was unquestionable

the brothers intent was absolutely malicious and harmful but fast forward a few years and the same brothers are standing in front of the same joseph who's now the prime minister of egypt and he tells them in genesis 15 you intended to harm me but god intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done the saving of many lives and joseph in that story was pointing us forward to jesus in this story the suffering he would endure the harm that the malice that would come his way and yet the salvation that he would secure in enduring all that the jews were intent on harm of christ that god was working out your salvation in all of us and mine the jews wanted jesus dead and yet it was through his death that you and i would live eternally the jews wanted jesus to be despised and rejected and to experience every possible grief and sorrow and yet as he did all of that served to prove and authenticate the fact that he was indeed the messiah that isaiah pointed us forward to in isaiah 53

the jews wanted jesus crucified they could have raised a mob they could have had him battered and the romans would have turned a blind eye because that's what they did but the jews wanted jesus very precisely crucified they wanted him hung on a tree because that was the symbol of god's curse and that brought great stigma and rejection that's why they took him to pilate they needed pilate to give the order because without pilate's order he couldn't be legally crucified so that's why the jews are making all these pleas at pilate's door he has to sign it off he's the only one who can say crucify him and so the jews plan was precise they were determined that jesus would be crucified deuteronomy 21 cursed is anyone who is hung on a tree we want him cursed they were saying and yet paul reminds us in relations 3 it was through jesus becoming a curse for us that we are redeemed how dark are these verses that we're going through in john 18 and yet in these verses as we explore them we see john 1 5 in high definition where it says the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it and the fact that god was engineering our salvation in this darkness it didn't make the jews that we're looking at any less guilty but it surely makes our vision of god all the more glorious what he could do in this and this is a point of application in the passage as we see this dense darkness and yet the glory of god breaking through surely we're encouraged to believe surely we're encouraged to believe that when we're going through dark valleys when we're going through black clouds we need fear no evil so we sat in if we know that the lord is with us the darkness did not overcome the light the darkness the darkness will not ever overcome the light of christ so when your children are not able to sleep at three o'clock in the morning because they've seen something dark on television we can tell them the darkness will not ever come ever overcome the light if the light of christ is in you if god is with you the lord is your shepherd you fear nothing and when we're in our middle age and we're stressed out of our minds with this thing and that thing and worry seems to be overtaking us and everything in the world seems to be dark then we come back to this and we remember the darkness did not the darkness will not ever overcome the light of christ and he is our lord and he's living in us we have nothing to fear and we can tell the person on the deathbed

the person who's the person who's starting to see the darkness of death and coach you if the lord is your light if the lord is your salvation you fear nothing because he is with you in the darkness he's the one who promises to take you through the darkness of death into the life that's everlasting now just before we move on to the second point i want to just try and get a slightly sharper focused picture of the men who were rejecting christ if we look at the jews as we consider how are they how are they responding to jesus what's their judgment upon jesus then it's very clear it's very easy to see their their response to christ their judgment about jesus is flat out rejection they did not believe in him they would not accept him as messiah absolutely unquestionably no we will not have him they would not have him as lord they would not have him as lord they wanted jesus dead and they were prepared to ride roughshod over all their laws they were prepared to compromise all their all their principles in order to to get this in order to have jesus killed now who were these men if you think about the darkness of all that they were plotting and all that they were affecting here who were these men were they mercenaries were they gangsters were they serial killers were they those who were terrified to to ever have a conversation with them that day well the reality is no they weren't these were the most religious people you could ever meet these were the men in suits these were the pillars of the community these were the men that were so religious that they would not step over the the doormat of pilate's palace because to do so would make them ceremonially religiously unclean so we see them on the doorstep speaking to pilate and pilate's going out he's coming in he's going out he's coming in because they would not cross the threshold because their religion would not let them one of the commentators notes the irony of all this a commentator called Bruce

Milne he says they seek cleansing before God in the religion while plotting and scheming the destruction of God's beloved son how tragic they seek religious ritualistic ceremonial cleansing before God while plotting and scheming the destruction of God's beloved son and Milne was on to say the rituals of non-Christian religion cannot cleanse the heart

Jesus alone is the way to God religion cannot achieve redemption ceremonies cannot save you know we sing it often in Christ alone my hope is found we can be the most religious people on the planet we can be the best dressed characters in church we can know our scriptures inside out as these Jews did we can recite our catechism we can have all the badges of Sunday school and YF and every club that the church puts on we can go to all the right meetings we can do all the right ceremonial things but none of these things will save us in Acts chapter 4 Peter and John again are addressing the high priest

[55 : 17] Annas and many of the the same Jewish officials probably that we're looking at as part of this pack and Peter and John tell them that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead salvation is found in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved the Jews were those who were embracing religion but they were rejecting Christ that was their judgment still goes on those who want to take off every box of religion put their faith in there and yet are far from Jesus never having asked them to forgive their sin never having asked them to come in to their hearts and to cleanse them never having received that grace which saves religion will get us nowhere if Christ is not at the center until we see the Jews it's a it's a sad it's a sorry picture secondly we see

Pilate we see this in verse 29 through to 38 and I'm not going to take time to go through these verses in any detail you can go through them again yourselves later in the day I want to just take a brief look at Pilate Pilate has gone down in history and I think if we were to ask anybody can you quote any of the lines and any of the questions that Pontius Pilate is supposed to have said the line that we would come back to time and time again the line that he's remembered for in history is the one in verse 38 it's the question he says to Jesus how he said it we don't know my guess is he said it with a kind of sad note of resignation what is truth the note of a cynical man who's seen so much hypocrisy who knows so much hypocrisy in his own life as Jesus challenges about a truth he says what is truth what is truth and that question of

Pilate has reverberated through the corridors of history ever since and that question of Pilate is as relevant today in our culture as it was on the first day that Pilate muttered it some would say today there is no truth everything's relative you have your opinion I have my opinion no truth don't tell me the truth it's all opinions we live in a very fluid age things that seem to be fixed in times past are in no means fixed today gender sexuality historical perspectives things that we look back on in years gone by and say that's the truth people say truth what is truth everything seems to be up for grabs today everything is fluid everything is changeable everything is relative and in matters of faith anything today is acceptable anything is tolerated anything is encouraged except someone who says there is truth what is truth says

Pilate what is truth to the politicians of our day the lawmakers the educators the ministers what is truth and Jesus answers John 14 with a resounding I am the truth I am the truth and Jesus came to reveal the truth the truth about our sinful selves the truth about who God is we don't get to make up our own bespoke customized God God has revealed himself in truth and Jesus has also revealed us the truth about how God would save us we don't make our own salvation plan one way one means

Christ and I know this is my personal opinion here but I think Pilate probably grasped a fair bit of that the charge that was brought to Pilate regarding Jesus was that he claimed to be king of the Jews but as Pilate started to question Jesus he could surely see verse 36 that Jesus kingdom as he spoke to Pilate Jesus made clear his kingdom was not of this world Jesus reign was not local politics Jesus reign was universal and eternal and as we see the poise and the dignity of Christ under such pressure his majesty is breathtaking even more so in contrast to the increasing growing nervousness of Pilate the man who's supposed to have power

[61 : 34] Pilate knew Pilate knew that he was not sitting before an ordinary man Pilate's wife knew because of the dream that we're told of in other gospels that this Jesus was no ordinary man man and yet here we see Pilate in these verses and he's squirming and he's sweating because he has been pressed to come to a decision about this man the Jews needed his order the Jews needed his sign off and so they pushed him and they pushed him and they pressed him to come to a decision

about Jesus he had to come to a decision about Jesus he didn't want to he was looking for every possible way not to but he had to come to a decision about Jesus and you you and I need to come to a decision about Jesus

I know we're not governors but today we are those who are being brought face to face with Jesus in the word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit if you're still hearing this then God is speaking to you and he is telling you you need I need to come to a decision about Jesus we hear Christ's answers we've been considering his life we have listened to his claims we survey his cross as he comes ever closer and closer to it and we have to make our judgments about Jesus we have to decide today what are we going to do with him what are we going to say about him what do we believe about him now

Pilate I think Pilate believed that Jesus was no ordinary man I said that already I know that Pilate discerned the innocence of Christ because in verse 38 Pilate goes out to the crowds who are gathered and he says I find no basis for a charge against this man as far as I see this man is innocent but Pilate also knew that if he went to these officials and rejected their pleas and came in on the side of Christ if Pilate believed that what Jesus was saying was true it was going to cost him and the crowds would turn and Rome would be on his case because a riot would definitely ensue and he would likely lose his job so

Pilate stood there I believed knowing the truth about Jesus to a degree anyway but the easiest thing for Pilate in saving his own skin was to go with the world so he went with the world I want to ask is there anyone here this morning in that position I guess there probably is you see Jesus you believe he is real you believe he is telling the truth about who he is and what he has done you see him as the sinless son of God and yet you know if you trust it's going to cost you some will turn on you relationships or in family perhaps or in the workplace will suffer they'll come under pressure some of your comforts the secret sins will be taken from you the job might become difficult and all that goes through the mind as you're thinking what will

I do with Jesus you know that he's God you know that he's savior you know that he's lord but perhaps you're here this morning and you won't ask him to become your savior and your lord you won't acknowledge him because the price tag of following him is too high you know the tragic irony is that everything that Pilate feared he was going to lose he lost anyway he lost it very soon after this because the history books tell us that Pilate's reign in that place was very short and he faded into ignominy in terms of the Roman perspective he wasn't a hero he was one who failed and very quickly he's taken out of that position he loses his job he's sidelined so the tragedy of this is all the more poignant that on this day he was willing to trade his soul to hang on to worthless things that he would lose anyway

[67 : 40] Jesus said in Mark cave what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul for what can a man give in return for his soul for whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him will the son of man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with the holy angels Pilate was ashamed he knew the truth but he wouldn't trust in the truth what happened to him later on we don't know for sure some traditions actually tell us that Pilate and his wife later on became Christians that can't be verified we can't be absolutely sure about this is it possible we might say surely not surely this man who had such opportunity on that day surely this man who actually signs off the execution of

Christ surely he and his wife could never become Christians and yet we have a word in our mind amazing grace is it possible it's possible I hope it happened to Pilate I hope he and his wife trusted Christ but we don't know because this time has passed your time is now our time is today 2 Corinthians 6:2 I tell you now is the time of God's favour now is the day of salvation we'll leave a prayer our heavenly father we thank you for your word and we thank you for the clarity of it we thank you for the challenge of it we thank you for the hope that is extended to us in Christ we thank you for the call of the gospel today now is the day of salvation and we thank you that no matter what we've done no matter how scarred our history might be even

Pontius Pilate if he repented if he turned from his sin turned in faith to Jesus we know that the grace of Christ is such that he and his wife could be saved but Lord we pray that you wouldn't be distracted by questions that we can't find answers to help us today as we consider our own hearts and our own lives and our own souls and as we consider the Christ who is before us in these verses help us we pray to make our decision to make our judgment and to put our faith in Jesus the truth the way the life the only one who can save us we ask Lord that today there might be someone here

who trusts Christ for the first time someone who we will hear in future weeks acknowledging Jesus as their saviour and their Lord we pray this in Jesus name Amen I haven't got time to go to the last point but I want you to think about this as a singer and think about this from the perspective of Barabbas a rebel guilty in prison he walks free how why because of Christ no condemnation now I dread Barabbas could have said that before lunchtime not because of anything that he had done but because of the fact that Christ was now standing in his place the one who was innocent took the guilt the one who was guilty went free Barabbas story and it's ours too if we trust in Jesus so let's sing this final hymn to God is