

Jesus

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[0 : 00] Well, thank you very much, Pamela, for reading to us. This is a great passage, and I'm excited this morning to be able to bring it to us. Thank you, Pamela, for reading.

Let me just pray as we begin. God, Father, just give us open ears to hear your word. Speak to each one of us this morning, and soften our hearts through the Holy Spirit to hear what you have to say. Amen. So this morning, we're going to see a death like no other. We've read our passage. We know what's going to happen.

And here this morning, we've read and we'll see that King Jesus, he is crucified, fulfilling messianic prophecy, taking that substitutionary place to redeem through his death.

That is a big, complicated sentence. And as we go through, we will see exactly what that means.

You know, this morning, we have our passage, and it is all about Jesus.

[1 : 05] There's lots of different people in it, and we'll go through it. But this passage is all about the Lord Jesus. You know, there's that phrase, isn't there? Famous last words. Normally, it's in the sense of, you know, I'll clean the dishes before bed, and then my wife will say, famous last words.

That'll never happen. You know, it's things like that, isn't it? But, you know, it got me thinking. Here we have Jesus' famous last words, or really, word. Because in the Greek, it is one word.

And his words are, it is finished. And so I looked some others up. Maybe you know some.

Sometimes people talk about things like this. You know, Bob Marley, he died quite young.

And his last words, supposedly, were, money can't buy life. That's what he said. Poignant, I would say. Winston Churchill, he was quite old when he died. He did a lot.

I'm sure we all know who that is. He is supposed to have said, I'm bored with it all. And Bessie Smith, she was a soul singer in America. And she said, I'm going, but I'm going in the name of the Lord.

[2 : 09] Some pretty interesting last words there. But I'm going to say that it is finished. There's no greater last words than that. Jesus has completed fully the plan of salvation.

This plan that was hatched before time even began, before the world was in existence. This was the plan. Now, if you're here this morning and you do not know Jesus, maybe you've heard of him, but maybe you're here exploring who he really is and why he matters.

Then hopefully by the end, you will see why these words have such a big impact on your life and why you've got decisions to make. And if you do know Jesus as your savior, then we will be reminded of the magnitude of Jesus's work of the cross.

This completed work and why it should cause us to recoil in horror at what happened to him and yet also rejoice in the freedom we now enjoy through life in his name.

So we've started this passage, as Pam said, halfway through a verse. So we need to know where we've been. Okay. I realize you might not have been here the last few weeks. So where are we?

[3 : 23] Well, Jesus has completed his active ministry on earth. That ends in about John chapter 12. He then goes with the disciples into the upper room and he washes their feet and then he teaches them about how to live once he is gone.

He spends a good few chapters of John teaching them about life after he's away. And as we just saw very helpfully, Palm Sunday, Jesus enters Jerusalem and he is arrested by the Jewish leaders and he is handed to Pilate and Archie and Ian last week.

They took us through exactly what happened in that. The Jewish leaders, they demand Jesus's death. They do not want him. They reject him. And yet Pilate finds no fault.

Pilate says, I can find no fault with this man. He does not deserve to die. And yet he gives in. And the start of 16 says, finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

Pilate, the people pleaser, he just hands him over to die. It's worth remembering as well. And once again, that's very helpful that here in our passage this morning, this is actually Friday.

[4 : 34] This is what we now call Good Friday. The disciples, they certainly would not have called this Good Friday. This was a terrible day for them. So they thought, but that's where we are. And it's the day of the preparation before the Passover.

And we'll think about that a little bit later. So we're going to see this morning, this is all about Jesus. It's about Jesus, the crucified in 16 to 18.

Jesus, Jesus, the king in 19 to 22. Jesus, the Messiah in 23 to 24. Jesus, the substitute in 25 to 27. And Jesus, the redeemer.

You know, at first glance, it seems that this passage, you know, we're not entirely sure what to think. I don't know about yourself. Certainly when I first read this, when I started studying, I thought, what am I going to say about this?

It's almost too familiar, isn't it? But you know, really, this passage, it almost seems at first glance to show Jesus humanity. But really, as we delve deeper into it, we'll really see that Jesus is in fact God.

[5 : 44] And that is what John is trying to show us. John 20 verse 31, the whole reason that he writes, he says, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

That is why John is writing. He is showing that this Jesus is all of these things, but that all of these things that he is truly God. So let's start with Jesus, the crucified.

So verse 16, Pilate, he gives in. He just wants to please the Jews. As was said in that video, there was real tensions. Pilate was in charge of this area. He was the Roman official, but he needed to keep it under wraps and he was worried about what the Jews were doing.

And we need to not gloss over the crucifixion because of familiarity. You know, Brunnsfield's logo, it's got a cross in it, doesn't it? I don't know anyone here might have a cross necklace on.

People wear them. It might be a fashion thing or it might be to show their faith. But crosses are common symbols, aren't they? They're common symbols. We see them. And it quite rightly is the central image, the central symbol of the Christian faith.

[6 : 58] But you know, to first century people, wearing a cross around your neck would be just totally abhorrent. A symbol of death, of shame. A horrifying symbol to put anywhere.

And that's what the cross was. Crucifixion, it was a method of corporal punishment that the Romans had designed or potentially they stole it from the Persians. Don't really know.

But it was to be as drawn out, as painful, as shameful as possible. And it was kept for the worst of the worst, the non-Roman citizens, those who just, the Roman society just didn't care for.

And they used it as a deterrent for others. The person, they were stripped naked. They were beaten as we saw last week. They were elevated in a place that everyone could see, lifted up on high. They had nails in their hands and their feet. And they died by suffocating slowly. As they hung there. The crucifixion was a horrible method of death.

[8 : 12] And this is what happened to Jesus. Now you might be saying, yeah, well, there's two others there. They're crucified as well. What about them? I'm sure there was many others, countless others that were crucified in their time.

That's true. That is right. And everyone dies, don't they? That is true for each and every one of us. But Jesus was different. Isaiah 53, 12 says this, therefore, I will give him a portion among the great and he will divide the spoils with the strong because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors.

He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. Jesus was different. Yes, he died in the same way but we'll go on to see why it was so different.

Pilate could find no fault. Pilate could find no fault in an earthly way but Jesus had done nothing wrong at all. He was the sinless one, the one who had done no wrong and that was only possible because he was truly God.

John actually here, you've maybe noticed, he doesn't actually mention much about the cross. He doesn't mention the details, what actually happened physically. He's more interested in the why. Why does this happen?

[9 : 35] Well, the innocent one has been wrongly accused and put to death and yet this was all part of the plan. That takes us to Jesus, the king, in 19 to 22.

So we have Pilate's inscription here on the cross. This would have been a plaque and it would have gone above the person and we've seen that over the last few weeks Ian took us through that Pilate questions Jesus.

He says, are you a king? And Jesus says that his kingdom, this is Jesus speaking, he says, my kingdom is for the world but it is not from the world.

Pilate couldn't get it. It wasn't an earthly kingdom that Jesus was talking about. But we saw that Jesus, he was mocked for this. The Roman battalion, this was 600 soldiers, they dressed him in a robe, they bowed down mockingly in front of him and they made a crown of thorns and a staff to mock him.

Then we have that shocking statement from the chief priests, these Jewish leaders who say, we have no king but Caesar. Something that in their faith just goes against everything that they should believe.

[10:49] You know, this inscription, this was common and what it actually was was that at the top it said the person's name. So in this case, Jesus of Nazareth.

And at the bottom was actually their accusation, why they are being killed. It was used as a deterrent in the crucifixion. It was used so that no one would ever do that crime again. You know, the two people either side of Jesus, they would have their name and then they would have what they had done wrong.

They would have murderer or they would have robber, whatever it was. So it makes sense, Jesus of Nazareth. But what doesn't make sense is the king of the Jews.

Jesus is being killed for being the king of the Jews. The chief priests here, they're absolutely livid. They say, do not write the king of the Jews.

That's not right. But that this man claimed to be the king of the Jews. You know, they were so angry because everyone could see it and everyone could read it.

[11:53] Jesus was lifted up on a place that was raised up. It was near the entrance to the city so people were walking in and out. As we've heard, it was a busy time of year. People would be coming and going.

They wouldn't all fit in the city. They'd have to go in and come back out to stay in different places. And it was written in the three main languages of the world of that day. Aramaic, Greek, and Latin. Everyone could see it and the Jews hated this. They hated that everyone could see it. So Jesus is being killed for being the king of the Jews.

He doesn't look like a king, does he? Which king have you seen that looks like that? Where are the conquering armies? Where is the throne room? Where are the royal subjects who do his bidding? What kind of king is this? You know, the true king, he conquers evil by letting evil conquer him. Now that doesn't seem to make sense, but Jesus, he gains the victory through an act of self-giving love.

[13:00] Sometimes it's called the upside-down kingdom. Jesus came to serve, not to be served. And at the end here, Pilate in 22, he's kind of over the Jews, he's over trying to please them, and he just says, what I have written, I have written.

He's dismissing them, saying, get out, basically. Pilate here, despite his ignorance in the previous section, he unknowingly just proclaims the truth that Jesus is the king of the Jews.

In chapter 18, Pilate says, what is truth to Jesus? And yet here, unknowingly, he writes the truth. King Jesus being killed.

So that takes us to Jesus, the Messiah. So this section where the soldiers, where they cast lots, you know, this, at first glance, this can just seem a little bit of an odd detail to have in.

We can read it and kind of just gloss over it and go, well, I'll go to the next bit. I'll go to the next bit. But what happens here is that the soldiers, they've put Jesus on the cross to die along with the two others, okay?

[14:16] Now, they did this at nine o'clock in the morning. Now, the crucifixion lasted all day. It could last all day. Here, in this case, it lasted about six hours. So it was a long day and the soldiers, they would have to guard the cross, make sure that people didn't come to try and, you know, stop what was going on.

That was their jobs. So what they would do is, and this would have been commonplace, is that they would, they would just take the person's clothes who was being killed. They weren't going to need them, were they? So they would take them.

But what they do is that there's this undergarment and it is woven in one piece and they decide not to break it apart, it will ruin it, so they cast lots. So what these Roman soldiers actually do here is that they unwittingly fulfill a thousand-year-old prophecy.

A prophecy from the time of David, a thousand years before Jesus, is here on the cross. And it's quoted there, and it might be in inverted commas in your passage, they divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

Now that is a quote from Psalm 22, verse 18. Graham read from that Psalm at the beginning. And that there is a verse from a prophetic Messianic psalm.

[15:30] Basically what that means is that it's a prophetic psalm, so it's looking to the future, looking to when the Messiah will come and that that person will fulfill certain things. That is what happens here.

The video helpfully showed us that Jesus coming in to Jerusalem in that way was fulfilling the Messianic prophecies and likewise this happens here.

You might be thinking, so what? What's the relevance here? Well, it shows us that the Bible is the true inspired Word of God.

This fulfillment here shows that Jesus is, as John 1 says, the Word who became flesh and made His dwelling among us. Jesus is the Messiah.

He's not just another man being killed. He is the Messiah, the promised King who would come to conquer. In verse 18, where Jesus is crucified with others, that is a fulfillment of that passage I read in 53 that shows that Jesus will be numbered with the transgressors.

[16:33] He will be killed with other people, basically. Something that is completely outwith of Jesus' control. In a humanly sense, He couldn't make that happen.

In verse 28, Jesus fulfills Psalm 69, we'll see later on, by being given vinegar for His thirst. Soldiers offer Him this vinegar.

You know, the Jews, they rejected Jesus as King, as their Messiah, because He wasn't the King that they either expected or that they wanted. One of the guys in the video said that, that they expected somebody to come in to conquer the Romans, to set up a Jewish nation again, to have an Israel, and they expected this King to come.

He was not the hero they wanted, but He was the promised Messiah. So that takes us to Jesus, the substitute.

We've seen Jesus crucified, we've seen Jesus the King, Jesus the Messiah, and now Jesus the substitute. You know, again, we have another little section here in 25 to 27 that we can read and we can just sort of say, okay, and then move on to the next bit.

[17:51] But what happens here is amazing. Jesus, He sees some of the people that are watching. So that's what would happen. People would go, maybe it would be people that they know or people would just watch out of some sort of morbid interest.

But here He sees some of His friends and His family. And what He does is He calls on John, the disciple, the person writing this account of Jesus' life. He says, look after my mother.

And likewise, He says to His mother, look after John. You know, Jesus' mother Mary, we reckon that most likely she was a widow by this point. So it would have been the cultural practice that she would have been looked after.

And Jesus, knowing that He was about to go, says to John, please look after my mother. Take her in and look after her. Jesus is ensuring that His mother is looked after those whom He loves are cared for once He is gone.

And there's two sort of side things to note here before the main point. The side thing, one is that John, the writer, is actually watching the events unfold. Last couple of weeks, we've learned from Archie and Ian that they really enjoy true crime and true crime videos and podcasts and they like watching these things.

[19:03] But what do the police look for when they're trying to solve something? Well, they look for eyewitnesses, don't they? Nowadays, they want dashcams and CCTV and all that kind of thing and maybe WhatsApp messages nowadays as well.

But really, it's eyewitnesses, people that were there that saw it, that can testify to what truly happened. And that is John. John watched these things occur.

So we know that it is a trustworthy source of information. The second little side note is that John just obeys straight away. It says that at the end of 27, from that time on, the disciple took her into his

home.

One example of how to react when God calls us to do something. Of course, we do not get the same call directly like Jesus gave to John. But God calls us in other ways to do other things for him. And we should obey like John obeyed. But you know, it's more than that. Jesus is telling John to take his place as son to Mary to care for her.

[20 : 09] And you know, similarly, I can't say that, similarly, Jesus is taking John's place on the cross. Now, it wasn't that John deserved a crucifixion. It wasn't that John was a murderer, a robber, things like this.

But John, like all of us, had done wrong. And he had to face God's wrath for sin. And why? You know, why?

Maybe you're sitting there thinking, but why is that the case? Well, Peter, very helpfully this morning, talked us through that, that that relationship is broken. God, the creator God, made everything perfect, and yet sin came in and broke that relationship between God and man. Sin causes a separation from us and God that needs fixed. Jesus is the plan of salvation. And we need to be made right.

Why do we need to be made right? Well, spend eternity in heaven. We don't know much about heaven. The Bible doesn't say an awful lot about heaven. But essentially, heaven is eternity with God.

[21 : 18] And God cannot have us there if we are not made right, if we are not perfect as we should be. And we're not, are we?

You know, if we had a plaque with our name on it, and we had our accusations underneath, I don't think any of them would be particularly terrible, so to speak, as society might say.

But you know what? I would not like my sins to be written on a plaque for all to see. We have all done wrong. We all have sinned. But Jesus, he had done no wrong.

That was only possible because he was God. But he takes that place for everyone else. So that we may be made righteous, just means to be made right, looked on as innocent by God because of the work of the cross.

If you're not a believer in Jesus today, you've not trusted him with your future. If you've not repented for all the wrong things that you've done, we know that we have, then I implore you to address that this morning, this very day.

[22 : 33] It is the most important thing. And that takes us to our final thing we see about Jesus, the Redeemer, in 28 to 30.

So up to verse 27, we've had the first three hours on the cross. Okay? And then between 27 and 28, which John doesn't talk about, but you can read it in the other gospels, we have the three hours of darkness.

Now we know from those other accounts of Jesus' life that Christ at this point suffers. He is forsaken by the Father and he takes that just punishment that we deserve because of our rebellion and our sinful ways.

So Jesus has borne this and then in verse 28, it says, later, showing a period of time has passed. Knowing that everything had now been finished.

You might say, well, how did Jesus know everything was finished? Well, one, he has taken that punishment in those three hours of darkness. The work has been done, but he also knows because he is God that his death is about to come.

[23 : 44] He is about to give up his life, as it says. His substitutionary death is imminent. He can only know that because he can willingly give it up.

So Jesus, he says, I am thirsty, in other versions it says, I thirst. So he takes this drink from the soldiers. So as I said, the soldiers, they've been out for about six hours at this point in the heat of the day in Jerusalem, a hot land, and this wine vinegar, this was just a drink that they would have to keep themselves going.

It was their job to stay there. I presume, being the Roman Empire, they were not allowed to go on breaks or anything like that. So this was just a drink that they used for thirst as they went through the day.

It's worth noting that this was a different drink to what was offered to Jesus, the drink with gall, it's sometimes called, before the cross. That was a sedative, that was an ancient painkiller that was offered to the person to dull the pain, to dull the senses as they went to a crucifixion.

But Jesus, he refused that because he had to be in his full mind to take the punishment of the cross. But this here, Jesus says, I thirst, and he takes this wine vinegar.

[25 : 01] And it is lifted to him on the stalk of a hyssop plant. So backtracking a wee bit, we know it's Friday, it's the day of the preparation of the Passover.

Passover. So the Passover is on the Saturday, the Sabbath, the Jewish holy day, it was the week was building up to that. And the Jews, they would kill the Passover lamb and they would eat it and they would celebrate that on the Saturday.

But being the Sabbath, the Jewish holy day, they had rules that they couldn't do things like that. Modern day equivalent, they couldn't turn the light bulb on, they couldn't switch on the oven, it all had to be done on the day of the preparation, on the Friday, the day before.

And the Passover festival, it remembers when the Israelites were rescued from Egypt. You can read that in Exodus 12, the Israelites, God's people, they were in Egypt and they were saved out of Egypt and they were spared the plague of the death of the firstborn son.

And they did that by killing a lamb and spreading its blood on the doorposts of their homes. When God saw that blood on the posts, then he passed over and death was avoided.

[26 : 16] That's what happened back in Exodus 12. So why am I telling you that? Well, in Exodus 12, verse 22, they instructed that they are to use the branches of the hyssop plant to spread the blood of the lamb.

Jesus is the sacrificed lamb. Allowing punishment and death to be avoided, to be passed over through obedience to God and trust in him.

Ian last week, he took us through the brutality of the flogging. How it would just rip someone's back open. It was a horrible thing. And the people often died from that alone, never mind making it to the crucifixion.

So blood was running down this cross that Jesus was on from his back. running down from his head on the crown of thorns, the beatings that he had had, the nails through his hands and his feet. Jesus is the redeemer. His blood was shed. He is paying the debt for others. The blood of the lamb pays the debt. Hebrews 9, it talks about the ancient blood sacrificed on many altars in Israel.

[27 : 32] And it talks about the Lord Jesus. And in verse 22, it says that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. But Jesus' blood was shed because he was the lamb, the sacrificial lamb that allows God to pass over in judgment and allows people to be saved.

And after this, Jesus receives the drink and he says his famous last word, it is finished.

The work was done. It was complete. The plan of salvation that was hatched before time has been carried out to the full. And with that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Jesus gives up his spirit. He gives up his life in a way that we can never do, knowing that his work was done. Jesus' suffering on the cross can give us freedom if we trust in him and if we seek forgiveness for our wrong.

The fulfillment of prophecy that we've seen here, it shows that Jesus wasn't just another person dying. It wasn't just another person killed by the Romans. but that he was God himself in human form.

[28 : 52] And you know, as Christians, if we're sitting here today and you believe all this and that is brilliant, then we want to emulate the Lord Jesus. Bearing in mind that we will never match up to how he is.

But we want to finish God's plan for our lives. God has a plan for each and every one of us. We are to live that out and seek to end our lives well.

Paul, in one of his letters in 2 Timothy 4, 7 to 8, which is potentially some of his last words that he spoke or certainly wrote down anyway, he says this.

Paul says, Let's run the race well and finish strongly.

Remembering that our home is actually in heaven and that we are just foreigners in this world and that we have a better place to go to. Let me just pray as we finish.

[30 : 11] God and Father, I just thank you for your word. Thank you so much for the Lord Jesus. That that plan was hatched before time even began, before the creation of this world.

That the Lord Jesus would do the will of the Father and go down and be that lamb who was sacrificed. Christ. We thank you for the truth that we've seen in these this passage this morning. And we pray that these things will continue in our minds and in our hearts this week as we think towards Easter. And we thank you so much for the glorious news of the resurrection.

that the Lord Jesus rose again and that he is at the right hand of the Father on high and that we worship a God who is not dead but is alive.
Amen.