

Road to Redemption

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of embracing the truth and the power of the name of Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for our sins and provides salvation for sinners.

Duration: 46:34

Scripture: Matthew 27:54, John 18:28, John 19:17, John 20:1-18, Romans 6:23

Topics: "Salvation Through Faith", "The Atonement"

Description

This sermon focuses on the road to redemption through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. It emphasizes the counter-cultural nature of the gospel, the power of Christ's sacrifice, and the personal decision each individual must make to accept or reject God's gracious gift of salvation. The message highlights the significance of Christ's death and resurrection, urging listeners to stop running from God and embrace the living God among dead things.

Transcript

This is going to be a message that will be probably one of the most important message that some of you have ever heard in your life tonight. Some of you need to be encouraged. Some of you will leave here encouraged and built up.

But all of you will be leave here a little bit different than when you arrived, because when we talk about the cross, you have to realize that a king. Saved his subjects, a creator stepped down from eternity and died for his creation. At some point, I think we need to look at the road to redemption, and that's why I've titled this message The Road to Redemption.

And we need to remind ourselves that this road is hard. This road is narrow. There are few who find it.

This road will be despised. This road will be mocked. The message that I'm giving tonight, most of the of our nation.

Would mock me, they would laugh, they would ridicule the very thing they need. It's the very thing they're running from. And what I want to do is just take some time and look at this road to redemption, because this is our only hope, folks, as our nation falls into a moral abyss, as families are shattered, lives are destroyed.

We need a hope. This is our only hope. Christians, you need to understand something.

Christians do not check our brains at the door. We look at the scripture, we look at the penetrating message of the gospel, and we recognize that we are sinners in need of a savior. And if it was not for the shed blood of Jesus Christ, we would not have redemption.

I want to talk about that tonight. If you have your Bibles, I'm going to be in John 18. I wish I had about three hours to unpack this, but I've got about 40 minutes.

But let's look at John 18, 28. And where we're picking up, many know the story, some people don't. Jesus has just lived, went from notoriety or actually went from obscurity to notoriety within three years.

This person that they say, who is this man? No man ever spoke like this man. And he was betrayed in the garden of Gethsemane. But before then, he was in that garden asking his father, father, take this cut from me.

Father, I cannot endure the wrath and indignation of God is going to be poured out on me in this one time in history. And I think we need to remember that this is a watershed moment for the history of the world, not just the church creator stepping down from his creation and taking on the wrath and indignation of God, absorbing the wrath of God. Can you picture that? Well, Shane, that's all a pipe dream.

Well, hold on. I'm getting there. That's what you're thinking.

But I will submit to you that it's not a pipe dream because humanity need to be saved. And the whole point of Jesus coming was to die on the cross, born to die, to bear the sins of the entire world on that one night in history. Jesus, knowing that is in the garden praying.

And he's the Bible records that he's dripping sweat, that it's filled with blood as well. It's the corpuscles when they become so intense that that blood comes out and he's weeping in the garden saying, father, father, would you take this cut from me? I cannot endure the wrath of God on the cross. Father, would you take this cup? Is there any other way? Is there any other way, father? Now's the time.

Now's the time to change plans. Is there any other way? He says, no, son, there's no other way. There's no other way.

You were born to die, and that's where we pick up and he's he's been taken now, he's been betrayed by his own, his own disciple, Judas, we almost know the story, betrayed Christ. And then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium and it was early morning, but they themselves did not go into the praetorium lest they should be should be defiled. But they might eat the Passover pilot pilot Pontius Pilate then went out to them and said, what accusation do you bring against this man? They answered and said to him, if he were not an evildoer, would we not have delivered him up to you? Then Pilate said to them, you take him and judge him according to your law.

Therefore, the Jews said to him, it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled that he spoke signifying by what death he would die. Now, this is amazing. Any cult, any other religion, religion outside of Christianity, they have a problem with the deity of Christ.

They have a problem with this is why he died. He said, I am the son of God. And the Jews said, wait a minute, that's blasphemy.

Anybody that says they're the son of God, death penalty. But because they are under Roman authority, they could not issue such a decree. So Rome had to issue that decree.

So the next time somebody says, oh, Jesus never said he was the son of God, he's dying because of it. He's the son of God, he's dying because of it. They're putting him to death because of blasphemy.

Obviously, we know that it's a sovereign hand of God guiding all of this. But they said he must he deserves death because he's declaring to be the son of God. And it's an interesting question that we must ask ourselves.

And C.S. Lewis asked this question, I think it was about 50 or 60 years ago. All of us, you have to realize this, you have to come to the realization that Jesus Christ is either a lunatic. Or he's a liar or he's the Lord Jesus Christ, there's no other options.

He's not just a good teacher, he's not just an icon we wear, he's not just the latest fad. He is either a lunatic, he's a liar, or he's the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are your options.

And if you look at the Bible, no pure words were ever been spoken. Grace permeated every ounce of his being. He was the embodiment of truth.

So you can't say he's a liar because everything he said was truth. And if you read the Gospels and say he's a lunatic, then you might need to check yourself because no man ever spoke like this man. And they went to arrest him and they came back without him.

They said, why didn't you arrest him? They said no man ever spoke like this man. His authority, his very presence. He would walk onto the scene and people would be possessed by devils.

And he would say, out of them. And what did the demons do, negotiate? No, no, no. They would say, master, demons say, master, do not throw us into the abyss, into outer torment, for our time has not come.

And he'd say, out of that man. He didn't negotiate. He didn't let me pray longer.

Let me pray harder. Let me. He, he was the embodiment of truth.

This was a son of God. The Bible says that even the demons know that he is a son of God and they tremble. The demons that we're all worried about tremble at the name of Jesus Christ.

That's why even now, some of you are getting upset. You're wondering when in the world is this sermon over? Because I don't like what he's saying. Why? Because there's no other name under heaven whereby which people can be saved.

Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Satan and Jesus are not equal. The light and darkness is not equal.

The light has overcome the darkness. End of story. So when Jesus would walk out, he would say out of that man, demonic influence out of that man, he would come up to a funeral procession.

He would say to leave like who my ally rise little girl and get up out of your coffin and present you to your mother. He would walk and leopards would be healed. Blind men would receive their sight.

A lunatic and a liar or the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a shame. Why do you get so passionate about that? Because he's changed my life.

A savior dying for me. You realize that. A king on a cross creation, killing their creator, unbelievable.

So on the road to redemption, if you want redemption, if you've been searching, if you've been wondering, if you've been asking, ask God, seek God with all of your heart, with all of your strength, he'll answer. He'll show you. But the first, the first signpost on this road to redemption is he must be Lord.

Jesus Christ is not just a good teacher, although he was the best teacher this world has ever seen. He was the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says Savior and Lord.

He saved me from my sin. Now I submit to the lordship of Jesus Christ. That is the very first signpost that we see here.

The next verse 33, the pilot entered the praetorium again, called Jesus and said to him, are you the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him. Are you speaking for yourself about this or did others tell you concerning me? Pilot answered, am I a Jew? Your own nation and chief priests have delivered you to me. What have you done? Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world.

If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight. There's a proof text for self-defense, I guess, huh? Gun debate. Don't get me started, I'll go on another rabbit trail, we won't get out of here on time.

So that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now my kingdom is not from here. Pilot therefore said to him, are you a king? Then Jesus answered, you say rightly that I am a king for this cause I was born and for this cause I've come into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.

Pilot said to him, what is truth? And when he and when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said, I find no fault in him at all. It's saying Jesus is saying, I bear witness of the truth, and this makes me realize that there are sides good and evil, right and wrong, light and darkness. Choose carefully.

Jesus said, I came to die and I also came to bear witness of the truth. Jesus is the embodiment of truth. So when he says, you know the truth and the truth shall set you free, you shall know the truth.

The truth shall set you free. Right. The whole scripture, a lot of people like to quote, but a lot of people haven't ever experienced.

It's that truth that sets you free, embracing the truth, looking to the truth. You see, you have to understand something. Truth is not flexible.

I'm going to say something that would upset Hollywood. I know I don't do that too often, but the truth is absolute. It's not flexible.

It's not negotiable. It's not what your opinion is. In my opinion, this truth stands as a lighthouse.

Truth stands as a lighthouse on the shores of a cliff saying vessel, turn around, go back home, turn around. I stand as a lighthouse to warn and to guide mankind. That's the problem.

The nation, why we're in the situation we're in is because we want to twist truth. We want to negotiate truth. We want to remove truth.

And then all hell breaks loose. So on the road to redemption, you must embrace the voice of truth. Jesus Christ is the embodiment of truth.

He cries out truth. Truth liberates. Truth rebuilds.

Truth heals. Truth transforms. Truth will prevail.

We see this issue of truth everywhere in our culture. That's really what the fight is over nowadays. It's over truth.

Nobody seems to know anything. Well, what's right for you might not be right for me, and what's right for me might not be right for you, and how in the world are you going to live like that? We know what the truth is because God has written it on our hearts, and when we don't obey the truth, we get something called conviction. The Holy Spirit saying, uh-uh, not a good direction.

Wake up. Even people who don't know God are convicted about things. Where does that come from? You ever think of that? A moral compass in our heart probably is put in there by a moral creator who has moral standards by which given to govern man and save him from himself.

So you have to embrace truth. Verse 39, but you have a custom that I should release someone to you at Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews? Then they all cried out saying, not this man, but Barabbas.

Don't give us Jesus Christ. Give us Barabbas, and this just jumped out at me because they're saying, no, we don't want Christ. We want a murderer.

We want a thief. Give us him, not Christ. The people cried, crucify him.

Crucify him. You don't think they say that today? Get Jesus Christ out of here. Don't even mention his name.

Don't pray at city council meetings. Don't pray in the schools. You can talk about every other Buddha and Allah and Hare Krishna and everything.

But when you mention the name of Jesus Christ, people get upset. Why? Because there's power in the name of Christ. That's what's going on here.

Think about it. Miley Cyrus can lick a hammer, but you can't hold the Bible up on stage. Well, let's get real.

Lady Gaga can mock Christ, but she can't bow to the real Christ. She'll lose her record deal. Why? What's the big deal? They bow to every other God.

But when you put the right God on his throne, even the demons tremble in the darkness, hates it. Get Christ away from me. And I notice that sometimes I'll pray with people, not here, but out in different things.

Everything's going good. But mention Jesus Christ. Why did you have to say that? Why? What's wrong with it? If it's a fable and if it's false, why is it so upsetting? You can mention any other name.

Nobody gets upset. We'd like a monument to such and such out in the city. Council.

No problem. We'd like to honor Jesus Christ. No, move the cross from the cemeteries.

Get the cross out of the military. Don't get that out of here. Because it's offensive.

Why is it offensive? Because it convicts a dying world of their need of a savior and a dying world doesn't want to save you because they want to be God of their own lives. I don't want there to be a God because I'm God. I want to do what I want, when I want, to who I want, how I want.

And when you challenge that, I'm going to be upset. That's where we find ourselves today. He took the place of a sinner.

Our first example here, he's taking the place of a sinner. It's interesting because the people got what they want. The crowd screamed, take him away, take him away.

And the reason is, and I'll shoot you straight as if I haven't already. But it's because the majority of people are not sons of God, they're not they're not born again. So they hate that name, they hate that that that that name of Jesus Christ, that darkness that they that we love to swim in sometimes doesn't want the light of the gospel.

Think about it, I go in my kids rooms at five in the morning, flip on the light, what's going to happen? Dad, get out of here, get out of here in the covering, get out of there, get out of there. So when you bring the light of the gospel into a darkness, they want to get out of there. The very thing they need is the very thing they're running from.

It's the light that sets you free. It's Christ who redeems. It's Christ who will set you free of everything you're going through.

Not perfectly, but he carries you through the storm. And then it picks up a chapter 19. So then Pilate took Jesus and scorched him and the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on his head.

Stop here. I stopped at the first service, too, because I thought this this this whole week I was thinking about this. And these aren't little thorns, you find a rosebush.

Oh, that hurt. You know, these are big inch and a half thorns that they made a crown. They twisted it and they put this crown of thorns on his head as it went in, the blood started to come down.

Now, think about that. Before that, he had been scourged with the Roman scourge with whipping him and pulling the flesh off of his skin. And they spent on him and struck him in the face as spit and blood meet and go down into his clothing.

And I'm thinking, how can he take that? How can he take that? Listen, one angel in the Bible destroyed an entire Syrian army of one hundred and eighty five thousand. Jesus, enough, enough. OK, enough done.

And all flesh would have evaporated. Think about as soon as somebody spit on me, that would have been it. Let alone the scourging and the crown of thorns.

I would even got that far. You spit on me. Guess what? Bam, done.

Oh, you Pilate, you too. Bam. You know what? All of Jerusalem, just like remember Sodom and Gomorrah.

Let me back up a little bit and rain hells of fire. So now Jerusalem's gone. Now let me go to Samaria and Judea and let me just destroy all mankind and start over.

You spit on me. That's what I would do. And I know you do it, too.

Sometimes I couldn't get through my study thinking God coming down, saving his people as his people beat him. And mock him and strike him who prophesied to us now, son of God, strike him. Why don't why don't you come and save yourself? You save all these people.

Why can't you stay save yourself? And he just stood there. To fulfill prophecy, Psalms wrote, as a lamb was silent on its way to the shears, he opened not his mouth and he just stood there and took it all. And I could not.

I just still blows my mind for me. See, make it personal. OK, tonight with all you had, you know, for you and you and you.

And he bore that for you. He bore that for me, my little one year old baby that I carry around. She can't even talk right now.

Christ died for her. He died for her. And that doesn't move you.

God, help us. It's amazing. It's absolutely amazing.

So Pilate took Jesus, scorched him. Soldiers twisted the crown of thorns, put it on his head. They put on a purple robe.

Then they said to him, hell, king of the Jews. Ha ha ha. And they struck him with their hands.

Can you imagine Roman soldiers hitting Jesus, hitting a person? And we just, oh, slaps. I mean, this is these guys. It was it was a mass.

This is this is unbelievable. I mean, to me, that's enough, that's enough. Have one good last meal, go up there, let alone all of that.

And then they called it the cross of the tree of death. Then he's got to carry it on his back, which he couldn't make it up the hill. And they got Simon and Cyrene to carry that cross up there.

This whole scene is just to me is is overwhelming. Then Pilate went out again and said to them, behold, I'm bringing you out to him that you may know that I find no fault in him. Pilate examined him and he found no fault in him at all.

Nothing. He's like, what's wrong with these Jews? This guy's I like this guy. Now, I'm ad-libbing, of course.

Don't say Shane said Pilate's a good guy. I'm just saying he's saying three times that I'm recording. What's wrong with him? Let's I find no fault in him.

Let's let's get this guy out of here. But what happens? I find no fault in him. And I want to ask the same question.

Now, if you examine Jesus, you will find no fault in him as well. The problem is many people do not want to examine him. Just shoot you straight.

They read this, but they've never read it. I mean, they mock this, but they've never read it. They'll poke fun at Christ, but they've never examined him, examined his life.

So, God, if you're out there, if you're out there, this bald head guy's a little too loud for me, but if you're out there, would you show me? I did that. I asked, I showed, I said, show me. That's why I get passionate, because he saved me.

I'm sharing Tuesday at a memorial, reminding you guys that summer Rosati's memorial is Tuesday. And I was just looking back over my my own life, and I remember all in one night snorting, getting an eight ball, a crystal meth, snorting it, getting high with marijuana, 12 pack of beer. And then I get a thousand milligrams of steroids, testosterone right there.

One night, I said, Lord, you saved me, saved me. I should have been in a gutter hung over. Cops come by and call my mom.

That's where he saved me. That's why I get passionate, because this is real. Life and death is real.

Jesus Christ is real. He's not a fairy tale. And we have to remember that.

He says, come and examine me, examine me, look to me, seek me. If you seek, God says, if you seek me with all of your heart, you will find me. Did you catch that? I could end the service right here for some of you.

If you if you seek God with all of your heart, you will find him. The problem is all of the hard stuff people don't like. Well, yeah, sure.

OK, if you're out there, whatever. Uh-huh. So, you know, there's not all of your heart.

All of your heart and vibes involves crying out to God, Lord, if you're real, if you're out there, show me, I want to know you. I want to know you think is not that joke or I'm not going to help that clown. No, he's looking.

The eyes of the Lord go to and fro to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to him. Look, if you seek me, you will find me. I will not let you go.

I will bring back what was driven away. I will bind up the broken. I will strengthen the sick, but the proud, the arrogant, I will feed in judgment.

Thus sayeth the Lord, God Almighty, I will find you. But you've got to seek me. And I found that before I found God, he was actually not lost.

You don't lose God like you lose your car keys. Creation screams creator. You've heard me talk about this before, right? The moon, the sun, the oxygen level, the nitrogen, the carbon monoxide, the water, the I mean, everything is just so perfect.

Oh, all that just happened. Really? That takes more faith to believe all that just happened, that there's a God out there who created this, who in the right mind is going to say that all these chairs put themselves in

order and last to give it a million year shame. These chairs have put themselves in order.

Not only would they not put themselves in order, they wouldn't even create themselves. Chairs. Chairs, not the universe.

A little baby's born, starts crying, now fills his lungs with air and now he's breathing. And, oh, that just all happened. I mean, that's why, because people don't want there to be a God.

Because then if there's a God, oh, my God. And many people say, I've got to make all these changes. I'll have to live like Shane to be some weird guy and give up.

No, it's. It's. See, the devil shows us the party, but forgets to show us the hangover.

Right. He'll entice, but he won't show you what's coming next. So the road to redemption makes sense.

Listen, we're not saying believe in this fairy tale up there or something. We're saying, listen, creation, somebody created us and something's wrong with their creation. Call me stupid.

Go on the news, look around the world. Something's wrong here. What happened? Oh, it's something called sin entered in because man said, I will.

Satan said I will be like the most high God. He fell from heaven and then he tempts man and woman in the garden. Now they take on that sin.

Now, guess who has sin DNA? All of us. God says, listen, I will provide a way of escape. I will bear the wrath.

I will bear my own wrath. If you think about this, is it just me? But God saying the wrath of God is on all the world of ungodliness for the wages of sin is death. But I'm going to absorb my own wrath.

The Bible calls it propitiation, satisfying the wrath of God on the cross. All you have to do, folks, is repent and believe on the only name that saves. You don't have to do 100 things here and keep this and do that.

You just believe. I've offered you a gift. Believe and repent of your sin and accept me.

That's it. This is this is a great time for celebration creation. See, to me, creation makes sense.

Our own conscience bears witness, does it not? Our we are created to worship, we all worship something. If you're not worshipping God, you're worshipping the things of this world. Whatever it is you fill in the blanks.

We all worship who gave us that that that that heart of worship, the creator to worship him. But then when worship becomes distorted, we begin to worship everything but him. And we get fearful and anxious and depressed.

And everything, why? Because we're out of alignment with our creator. When we're in alignment with our creator, although we'll struggle with those things, don't get me wrong. The heartbeat is the Holy Spirit of me in the Holy Spirit, God's Holy Spirit is crying out of a father, the Bible says is crying out of a father, the Holy Spirit is given to me as a seal, as a guarantee until the day of redemption.

So it's not like, well, I believe something, I guess it's right and I don't know, I'll try to keep this up as long as I can. He's changed my entire nature. Everything's changed, doesn't mean we don't struggle with sin.

Right, I've told you that before, it doesn't mean an ice cold beer doesn't look good. And one's going to turn to 12. And so you stay away, you know, he's still coming after people.

But everything's changed. Now I have a passion for the word of God, a love for the word of God. I know I'm on my way to heaven.

There's no there's no question. No, I don't question it. I don't question it because it's residing within me.

Crying out of a father. So it's not like, you know, I'll believe this thing out there. We're saying, believe all this has been substantiated.

The Bible, archaeologically, prophetically, scientifically, everything. We don't check our brains at the door. God says, test me, try me.

God says, test it, yeah, test me, try me in this. I will show myself faithful. So we have on this road to redemption, it all comes together, it all makes sense.

And then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. You have to picture this, your. Your savior.

Or the savior that you don't know that you're rejecting walks out in front of the people. And he's beaten beyond recognition. He's wearing a crown of thorns.

This purple robe is on him. And Pilate said to him, behold, the man. Therefore, the chief priests and officers saw him.

And they cried out, saying, crucify him, crucify him. Pilate said to them, you take him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, we have a law.

And according to our law, he ought to die because he made himself out to be the son of God. That's a game changer. Pilate goes, what did you just say? In the Idleman version, he said that, but he's.

But look, look at Pilate's going, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Wait a minute, when Pilate heard that saying, he was more afraid. And went again into the praetorium and said to Jesus, where are you from? They just said, where are you from? This amazed me, because every other person that would stand before Pilate would shake in their shoes and grab his feet and plead for their life.

Now, Pilate is shaking in this man's presence. That's the son of God. Pilate says, why don't you answer me? Answer me.

Jesus said you'd have no power over me unless it was given to you from above. I won't answer you. You answer me.

You will you will tremble in my presence. I will not tremble in yours. So this is a game changer.

I'm sure he's like, how can this is not good? Because he's thinking Pilate's thinking this guy is not backing down. He's not crying. He's not weeping.

He's not grabbing my feet. Let me go. Pilate actually says, listen, I can let you go or I can crucify you.

Talk to me. Jesus says, no, you'd have no power over me at all unless it was given to you by God. This is the sovereign plan of God.

As a lamb led to the slaughter. The lamb who was slain before the foundation of the earth for the life of the flesh is in the blood. Everything that you're wondering, well, it doesn't make a lot of sense.

Trust me, we can answer all your questions. If you look back in the Old Testament for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. The life of the flesh is in the blood for life for life.

Christ had to come be the perfect sacrifice in order to redeem mankind. To me, it makes perfect sense. This isn't some astrological projection out there considering all these elements of of nuances and what? This makes perfect sense.

The only perfect sacrifice. That's why the animal sacrifices were just temporary. They were a foreshadowing of the things to come.

And if we had time, we could walk through the temple, the inner court, the outer court, the holy of holies where no one could go except the high priest and only once a year to make atonement for the people. So when Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice, dies on the cross and the veil in the temple rents from the top to the bottom, saying God says, now you have access to the father through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. To me, that makes perfect sense.

Actually, it makes so much sense, archaeologically and scientifically and prophetically throughout the Bible that it's scary. No man can ever write that book. That's why French skeptics and atheists and Darwin and everybody tried to get rid of it.

People come on the scene within 50 years. Christianity will be obliterated. And now there ended ended up printing Bibles in that person's house in Europe many years ago.

See, I'm finding something you can't get rid of truth. You can suppress it. Our culture is going to try to get rid of it.

They're going to try to silence people like me very quickly. Why? Truth won't get it. Truth stands there.

So they have to remove, get it out of our face. But it won't. It still stands there as a light calling.

It called people 2000 years ago. It's calling people today. He made himself out to be the son of God.

The road to redemption is personal. And that's what I alluded to earlier already. Make this personal.

I sometimes I think we think, yeah, Jesus died for the sins of the world and he did. But for you and you and you and those, if you've never embraced God's gracious gift. You've had religion or you thought about it or he died for you.

So it's our. The decision to accept or reject the gracious gift that God has been given, that God has given us to it's that it's that easy shame. Absolutely.

It's that easy. And the pilot said to him, are you are you not speaking to me? Do you not know that I have power to crucify you and the power to release you? Jesus answered, you could have no power at all

against me unless it was given to you from above. Therefore, the one who delivered me to you has the greater sin.

From then on, Pilate sought to release him. I bet he did. But the the Jews cried out, saying, if you let this man go, you're not Caesar's friend.

Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar. So they threw in the old card. Oh, Pilate, you better take our side because we're going to go to Rome and have you probably executed.

So here's what we see. Pilate was more worried about the opinions of men. Was he not? Pilate was more worried about the opinions of men.

And if you want to be on the road to redemption, this road is counter cultural. You know what that means? It goes against the culture. Stop trying to be popular.

Stop trying to impress everybody. Stop trying to be one of the boys or in with the crowd. It's not the gospel runs counter cultural.

When the gospel goes forward, everybody gets out of the way. We can't be united because we're divided with light and darkness. So why can't I be friends, everybody in this? You can't.

What I'm saying is counter cultural, right? If I if I go down on Sunset Boulevard and start saying this, I will not make it home tonight. You think I'm joking? If I give this message of redemption, say, listen, the wages of sin is death. I'm a sinner just like you.

The only difference is I've repented of my sin and embrace the gracious gift that God has given. Crucify him away with him, get rid of this guy, put him in a back alley, stone him, kill him. Why? Because it's offensive, it runs counter cultural.

Here's why the culture is going this direction. In the message of the gospel, Christianity is going the opposite direction, and you can't run in the same direction when you're going opposite directions. Think about that Facebook page.

Facebook's not going to look the same as the culture. You're not going to watch the same things as the culture. You're not going to talk the same way as the culture.

You're not going to go the same places as the culture. You might be called a Jesus freak. You can call me a Jesus freak, right? You've heard me say that.

You can call me radical. You can call me extreme. You can call me whatever you want.

But don't say that Christ hasn't changed my life. You put whatever label on it you want. And then verse 13, when Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and set him down in the judgment seat.

It's funny. He puts Christ in the judgment seat. Of all people, in a place that is called the pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Now it was the preparation day of the Passover and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, behold, your king. And they cried out away with him, away with him, crucify him.

Pilate said, shall I crucify your king? And the chief priests answer, we have no king but Caesar. Then he delivered them to be crucified. And so they took Jesus and led him away.

And this is interesting. It's like what I call the dichotomy of the Christian faith. Hosanna one day and crucify him the next.

Remember, he was coming in on that colt, on that donkey. And they're saying it's fulfilling. I believe Zacharias was one of the prophets.

He was fulfilling that prophecy. And they're saying, Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna. And the religious leaders were jealous.

They said, teacher, tell your disciples to be quiet. Jesus said, if they were to be quiet, even the stones would cry out and worship me. Hosanna, all this, this, this accolade, all this attention.

Hosanna, Hosanna, the son of David. And then now it's crucifying him. The crowd is screaming, crucify him, crucify him.

I mean, picture a standing there looking out over the sea of people saying, crucify him. He's saying, I'm just thinking in his mind, he's saying, I'm dying for you. Probably not most of them, right? Because they rejected him.

It's the same thing with us. Do we reject it or do we embrace it? And then verse 17, the king on the cross and he bearing his cross went out to the place called the place of the skull, which is in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified him and two others with him, one on either side and Jesus in the center. Now, Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross.

And the writing was Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews. You can see up there it's written in three different languages. And we have to remember something, the cross.

The cross was a cross of shame and humiliation. It was ugly. And that's why I wanted to bring two opposing crosses.

You see the nice, beautiful one. You know, that's the culture's perception, right? The nice, beautiful cross. But this is the type of cross that would happen, where the crucifixion would happen.

The spikes were so large, the spikes through his feet, everything. A savior dying on that cross. It's ugly.

It's humiliating. That's the most humiliating death a person could ever go through. Being exposed naked, he was for six hours on the cross as he bore the wrath of God.

He bore the wrath of God and separated from God. Remember, we talked about that a few weeks ago. He said, Eli, Eli, Lama Zabachi, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Jesus Christ is saying, my God, my God, Eli, Eli, why have you why have you forsaken me? Because a holy, righteous God cannot be part of sinful, fallen man.

So for that one time in history, Christ had to become sin for us, took the wrath of God. For that one time in history, the sun in the sky was dark and the ground shook. Gave up his ghost.

He gave up his spirit. The Bible says, depending on the translation, he said, it is finished. It is done.

That's it. That's it. As the song said, hell's laughing, the savior is dead.

We've won. Oh, what happened? This gospel, John doesn't talk about it, but in the other gospels, it does. Actually, when he died, the scripture records that the ground shook like an earthquake.

Shook everything and the temple, the veil in the temple is ran from the top to the bottom. Dead people rose out of the graves and begin to walk in the cities of Jerusalem. Why? Because there was so much power in what Christ has done that the earth travailed and the Roman soldier, the Roman soldier, maybe the one who nailed this in his feet or that in his hands.

Maybe the Roman soldier who mocked him and hit him was left speechless and said, surely this was the son of God. I mean, there's so much power in that right there. You could cause a national revival if God's people would repent and look, look at what Christ did on the cross.

He said it is finished. It is finished. And then, as we know, he was buried on the third day, the women ran to the tomb, they found it empty and they went and told all the disciples.

And that's when we see and that's what we celebrate on Easter, the empty tomb. See, as gruesome as that was and hell, death and the grave thought they had won. The empty tomb proves who he said he was.

Even secular historians, Josephus, Jewish historians, many saying that there was a Jesus Christ. And you have to, you have to come to this understanding. If he didn't rise from the dead, if it was all made up, they stole his body, which they can't steal his body.

When you put a garrison of Roman soldiers to guard a tomb, if the body is stolen, they'll lose their life. And if they're all making this up, why did 11 of the 12 disciples die as martyrs? They're going to die for a lie. See, it doesn't hold argument, I mean, your argument doesn't hold water to say, oh, that's just made up.

No, the disciples, it's recorded, hung upside down, crucified upside down, beheaded. Because they wouldn't renounce Christ. They wouldn't renounce Christ.

They would even come and hold their children over the lion's dens, denounce Christ. What would they say? Usos and Kerios, Greek, in Usos and Kerios, Christ is Lord, Christ is Lord. And they would drop their kids.

It's all recorded. Read Fox's Book of Martyrs, read what people went through. They're not going to go through this for a lie, folks.

This isn't a lie. The only difference is when Christ said it's finished, it's finished for those who embrace the gracious gift. It's wonderful for those who embrace it, but it's hell for those who don't.

Now, I want to close with this as a worship team comes up. Chelsea read something earlier. And I often think of this, some of you need to stop running from God.

Whether you're the prodigal, whether you don't know him, whatever the case is, stop running from God. He's not like a little crybaby in the corner waiting for you to turn to him. He is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's not a doting grandfather. He's not the big guy upstairs. He's not a cosmic force.

This is God, creator of heaven and earth. He says, I lay it out for you. Choose life that you may live or choose death.

It's your choice. See, that's ultimate love to allow a person to choose to love God. If he just made you, where's that? That's a puppet.

But he gave us a choice. And what happens, I've seen this many times, especially in our culture, is after the tomb was empty, the women go there. The angel says something very interesting.

She says, why are you looking for the living among the dead? And many of you are looking, searching among dead things. Dead things in your life, dead things that don't pay, the enemy is set to kill, to steal and to destroy. The enemy goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

Why are you looking for a living God among dead things? Why are you rejecting a living God and turning to dead things instead? So during this time of worship, I'm just going to ask that everybody just bow their head. We're going to pray. You can get the lights, too.

And we're just I just want to ask if you want to make a decision tonight, does everybody keep their heads bowed? I'm going to pray if you want to make a decision tonight and say, listen, I need Christ. I need him tonight. My life has been going crazy.

I'm not making an emotional decision, but I need God. I need what you're talking about. I'll just just ask that you put your hand up and let me know, acknowledge that you want this.

You want Christ tonight. Thank you. Thank you.

Is anybody else? Thank you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you as well. God bless you.

God bless you. I see you guys. God, seize your hands.

Just pray this, Lord, I need you. I'm repenting of my sin. Lord, I've been away from you all of my life.

I'm coming home. Lord, I repent of my sin. I believe in the only name that saves.

I believe that Jesus rose from the dead. I believe that he died on the cross for me. Lord, would you fill me with your spirit? Lord, I have nowhere to go.

I'm coming to you tonight. The prodigal is coming home. The wayward daughter is coming home.

The person who doesn't know him is coming home tonight. Just cry out to God. It doesn't matter what you pray or how you pray or what you do.

It's a condition of your heart breaking and repenting before God tonight. And we ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/FKoHewq17xU.mp4>

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