

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

Isn't that beautiful? It's a lovely invitation that resonates with every single one of us. I mean, weary and burdened, absolutely. Rest—I'd like to sign up for that. How many of you hear an invitation like that and feel it deep in your soul? For me, when I hear those words, it's as if my soul just quiets down. It wants to open up and receive that rest from Jesus. Yet, if we're honest, there is a large gap between the invitation of Jesus and our experience of Jesus.

Often, we hear about these kinds of words around finding rest for our soul, and while we believe them, it is more difficult to take those into our bones. We hear that and realize that isn't quite what I seem to feel when I settle down into the presence of Jesus. We are tired, weary, and burdened, and often the things that we believe are true are different than the things that we live as true.

There is a gap between the invitation of Jesus and our lived experience. It's difficult to admit, yet that's what we experience. I believe this comes from whatever it is you hold in your mind when you think about God. Often, it's our image of God, what comes to mind when we think of God, that develops and cultivates our disposition towards God. I've used this quote before, but I want to return to it and expand it a little bit further. A.W. Tozer wrote,

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us...For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at any given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God... A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

“We tend by secret law of the soul to move towards our mental image of God.” This means if you do not have, in your mind, the mental image of God in the words of Matthew 11, that invitation of gentle and humble of heart, then it will be very difficult for you to be a gentle and humble person.

There's this strange tendency in human beings where we assume God reacts to us about the same way that we would react to us if we were not us. We tend to think that if we are sick of ourselves, then surely God must also be sick of us. If I'm disappointed in myself, surely God must also be quite disappointed in me. If I've run out of patience with my own weakness, then surely the patience of God must also be exhausted. We take our emotional limits and project them onto God. We then call that projection, God, which becomes problematic because it counters the reality of who God actually is.

That was Tozer's point. We move towards our mental image of God; therefore, it is very important that we allow Jesus to depict who God is on his terms, not ours. The dissonance between what we hear in the life of Jesus, what we hear in that invitation from Matthew 11, and how we actually live is not the result of God but the result of our distorted view of God.

We're in the middle of this long series through the Gospel of John, and last week we encountered a soaring text. It was Jesus in the midst of this massive festival, hundreds of thousands gathered, and he hijacks the whole scene to proclaim who he is. “I am the living water.” We asked the question: Who is Jesus?

I want to push a little bit deeper because this text brings us to an adjacent, or even more important question: What is Jesus like? Not just who is Jesus, but what is Jesus like? And rather than answer that question with a list of attributes as the biblical writers so often do, it is answered with a story. Because sometimes some things are so true that words in a definition don't get the point across, but a story does. Drama and story have a way of entering into our minds from a different perspective. This morning we ask that question: What is Jesus like? We will see that front and center in the text.

We'll pick up right where we left off last week in John 7, but we do have to do a little bit of work here at the beginning because if you open your Bible, there's likely all sorts of footnotes. In mine, the whole text is italicized. Others might have a heading that's in front of this text. It's like a flashing warning sound. So let me spend a couple of minutes explaining the warning. If you have the NIV, which is what we teach and preach from, your text probably has this right at the beginning of it.

“The earliest manuscripts and many other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53 through 8:11. A few manuscripts include these verses, wholly or in part, after John 7:36, John 21:25, Luke 21:38, or Luke 24:53.”

How's that to just get you in the mood for a good story? What's going on here is that this text has been discovered not to be in the earliest

manuscripts, which are like the earliest copies of the Gospel of John going as far back as we can. So there is scholarly consensus that John did not write the section of scripture that we're looking at. They want to flag that and make sure you are aware of it. However, we do have historical evidence that this story was circulating all throughout the ancient world by the time of around AD 60 to AD 130. This was a very common story that was being passed around all throughout the ancient world.

This stirs up all sorts of questions like, "What do you do with this? Why would we preach it if it wasn't in John's words?" I had a good conversation with a few on staff about that very topic, and the consensus we came to is that this is, no doubt, and scholars would agree across the board, an actual event, an actual story that took place. That's why we have the text as we do.

It was just way too common in the ancient world for it to be made up. You see details that seemingly have no purpose, like when Jesus writes in the sand, and most scholars just say, "Well, we'll talk about it. We don't know what he wrote; that's just the foreshadowing." But scholars say, "Why would you add that if there's no meaning to the text?" And the only resolution to that is it actually happened. Jesus bent over and wrote in the sand. There's no other reason to add a silly detail like that, as it does nothing to advance the story.

So this text doesn't appear in the earlier examples, but it was common in the ancient world. My take on it is that it's something that happened. As I looked at this text, there's nothing theologically in it that is load bearing, meaning there's no doctrine that we hold that's dependent on this text alone, but rather this text is wildly consistent with the character of Jesus across the witness of the New Testament. That's why we've decided it is worthy of preaching. So that's the disclaimer.

If you're interested in the canonization of Scripture—how we got the books of the Bible that we have—about seven years ago, I, with my predecessor, Mark Mitchell, a student pastor, Ben Melli, and another pastor on our staff, Dominic Rivera, led a long-form seminar. It was about four hours, called "Understanding Your Bible." In it, Ben Melli did an excellent lecture on the canonization of scripture.

So if this stirs questions and you're like, "Wait a minute, what does this mean? Can we trust the Bible?" I highly encourage you to go look at that. You can go to cpc.org/scripture and then scroll three-quarters of the way down. It is called "Understanding Your Bible Workshop." It's an excellent lecture. You'll come away realizing we have far more evidence of the scriptures than we do of any of the classics like Homer's Iliad. It's wild. Now, back to this beautiful story. Let's pick up John 7:53.

Then they all went home but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. John 7:53-8:2

The scene unfolds like we had picked up before. There's a reason that the editors later added it to this location, because we just saw Jesus teaching in the temple courts, and now we see him teaching there again.

The way they taught in the ancient world was reversed from what we do. I would be sitting; you would be standing. That's why he comes in, and he sits to teach, and they would be standing. But you want to get the scene in your mind. A crowd of people gathered around in the temple courts, which was something akin to the cultural center of activity in the ancient world. This isn't just a random place on the street corner. This is the epicenter of all the cultural activity of the time. Jesus is there preaching, and now we get to verse 3.

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. John 8:3-6

So put yourself in the scene. This is such a visceral picture. Jesus is teaching; a crowd is gathered. Some commotion is stirred up in the back as the religious leaders of the time are dragging this woman, certainly against her will, right into the middle of the scene. All the eyes are fixed on this woman.

They say, "Jesus, this woman was caught in the act of adultery," which means exactly what it says. There are reasons as to why. They walked into the room as it was happening. They take her, as far as we can tell, from that moment, throw her there, and pose this question, "In the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women." Now, all of this is used to test Jesus.

They're trying to trap him, and the first thing we need to notice is how terrible religious people can be. I mean, they are absolutely using this woman with zero regard for her as a child of God, and as someone with a soul, and using it in all of their religious zealotry to be a pawn in their own hatred.

In the ancient world, if you were to make an accusation of adultery, as is happening here, the standard in the law of Moses was for the witnesses to actually catch them in the act. We live in a little more of a gray area now, where we would make an accusation and say, "Well, I saw them coming out of the room at the same time the next morning." We would infer or imply. But the law of Moses does not give any room for that. You had to catch them in the act.

Not just that, you had to have two witnesses who would attest to the same. The reason I belabor this point is because it would've been very difficult to actually catch someone in that act with two witnesses. The point being, it is very likely that they did not just stumble across her, but rather they had set this whole thing up in order to trap Jesus. This was an intentionally laid trap. Not only do they bring the woman, but they bring this question: "In the law of Moses, it commanded us to stone such women."

Notice the terrible vitriol in their voice: "Such women like this," Like they're the problem. It is everything wrong with the religiosity of the

ancient world and ours that they would stir up this vitriol, pour all their dehumanizing language on this poor woman. They bring her in, they throw her there, say, "Jesus, what do we do with this woman?"

Now, I don't have to tell you that adultery takes two people. The glaring omission from this whole situation is: where is the man at? There were two witnesses who caught them in the act, meaning both the man and the woman are in the room, so where is the man in this whole thing? They completely disregard that aspect, which further give evidence that this was all a staged trap in order to throw her before Jesus.

The likely theory is that they had actually, in a backdoor situation, worked with the man and said, "We'll let you go if you go and commit this, and then we'll bring her before Jesus," because the law that they cite also would hold the man just as accountable. Both would have to be stoned for the act: the man and the woman. That's the scenario. It begs the question: Where's the guy?

The religious leaders refer to Deuteronomy 22 and Leviticus 20, where this law resides. But because of this high standard of accusation, there's, in the ancient world, little evidence that this law was ever carried out, which is also interesting. Their zeal for the law is there, but no concern or regard for the woman's soul. She's just a pawn, collateral damage in their ploy to trap Jesus. Why is it a question that traps Jesus?

First, he could have two responses to this moment. He could say, "Let her go." If Jesus had just said, "Hey guys, just let her go. That's not the intent of the law. Just let her go." If that had been the response of Jesus, they could claim that he did not take the Law of Moses seriously. This is in the Ten Commandments, isn't it? Do not commit adultery. So the first ploy is getting him to lean into his ministry reputation built on grace and forgiveness. They could say that he doesn't take the Law of Moses seriously.

Secondly, he could say, "Okay, that's what the law says. Let's stone her." Now, if Jesus had said on that, "Come on, everybody, pick up the stones, pick up the rocks. Let's have this thing unfold," he would've nullified the very ministry that he had built up on grace and forgiveness. He had gained a reputation, the scriptures say, of being a friend of sinners, so if he went that route, it would've destroyed his ministry at the core.

On top of that, if Jesus were, in fact, to tell them to stone her, he likely could have been charged with breaking the Roman law, which said that only Rome could carry out capital punishment. So even though these religious officials are saying the Law of Moses says this, they wouldn't have been authorized to carry out this law. That was under Roman rule. They were the only ones who could carry out capital punishment. If he says stone her, he breaks Roman law. If he says let her go, he breaks the Jewish law.

This is far more than just a trap. Ultimately, at the bedrock of this scenario, is this question: How can justice and mercy be reconciled? It is such a human question. It's such a question in our own souls and hearts. Yes, it's happening in that moment, but this is a question we've all wrestled with. How do we uphold the justice and beauty of law, but also the mercy and grace of God?

Depending on the circumstances, you could find yourself on either end of this spectrum. If injustice is done to you, your prayer is commonly, "God, why don't you just do something?" What you're desiring in that moment is justice. But then a week later, you find yourself perpetrating injustice, and you say, "God, couldn't you just forgive me? I was just having a bad day." You're desiring the grace and mercy of God. This is one of those questions at the core of the human experience. How do we balance justice and mercy? How are those two things harmonized? It's the constant tension in the human experience. We experience it on both sides.

I want to take us back to that scene in Exodus. Moses goes up on Mount Sinai, and he receives the Ten Commandments. They're etched into stone. Then he comes down, and the people are just a mess; he gets angry and breaks the tablets. He's like, "Well, now I have to climb back up the mountain and get more." So he goes back up and receives the Commandments again. God writes them down, and then we see this scene in Exodus 34. It is God not just giving the law any longer, but he actually gives Moses his name, which is speaking to the character of God.

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation." Exodus 34:6-7

Right there in the very character of God, as revealed by the mouth of God, is in fact that same tension. "The Lord, the Lord, compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin." That's the part we love. "Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished and punishes the children and their children for the sins of the parents to the third and the fourth." At the very character of God is this tension of justice and mercy.

I was reminded all week of Psalm 85. It's one of my favorite lines in the Psalms. It says, "*Love and faithfulness meet together. Righteousness and peace kiss each other.*" Somehow, whatever we're going to watch Jesus unfold in this scene reveals to us that very character from Exodus 34. It is not that there was some God in the Old Testament, and Jesus came and changed that. Jesus is the perfect representation of the character and essence of God. That's what we mean by Jesus, the incarnate God. It is God in the flesh. So whatever Jesus does perfectly reveals the heart of God the Father. He perfectly will reveal what it looks like for righteousness and peace to kiss each other, for God to be slow and abounding in love, and yet not leaving the guilty unpunished. With that, let's go back to the story. How does Jesus resolve this tension?

They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who

is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. John 8:6-9

Jesus receives this question meant to trap, and the first thing I want you to notice is the composure of Jesus. He stoops down and begins to write in the dirt. There are a lot of different theories as to what he was writing. We have no clue is the answer. Some say he was writing the Ten Commandments, which he's then circling adultery and false witness, and he is stating that these are the ones we should focus on. Or others say he is writing the sins of everyone there, which would probably take quite a bit of time. I don't think that's happening.

The point is if the writers of scripture wanted us to know what he wrote, they'd tell us. All I want to point out is his composure. Jesus is unflappable. He will not get caught up in the chaos of the scene, which is so hard for us because we do not live in a quiet world. We live in a loud world, and Jesus pierces through all of that. He did not just snap back. He did not get caught up in the insistent questioning of the religious leaders. He pauses. He takes a moment.

And in the midst of all of that, it says that they kept on questioning him. This is the insidiousness that I mentioned about religious zealotry. They continued to push Jesus. What do you say? What will we do with this woman? And Jesus will not be caught up in it. He will not allow them to dictate the terms in which he reveals the very character of who he is and who God is. He takes a breath, and pauses.

We don't have time to get into it, but there's a word for us on how we act in our cultural moment. Do not get caught up in the chaos of our time. Take a breath. Slow down. Jesus does all of this, and then he straightens up and says these words, "Let any of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." This is brilliant, and I want to just clarify a few things, because it can be subtly misunderstood, but I want to unpack it just so you can see the brilliance of Jesus.

Often we read this, and think, well, no one there is without sin, and so no one can ever make an accusation. But that would become problematic, because I don't think that Jesus would say, "Hey, that person murdered someone, but we've all sinned, so, well, we can't do anything." It doesn't mean anyone who is without any sin at all. Jesus is actually upholding the law. Most scholars say he's quoting from Deuteronomy 13 or Exodus 17. One commentator, Gary M. Burge, wrote,

This does not mean that the woman's accusers must be sinless or morally perfect in order to bring charges against the woman. In such a case, accusations would be impossible at any time. This is simply a direct reference to Deuteronomy, which says that those who witness a crime and bring home a successful accusation must be the first to stone the victim. Burge

Jesus is flipping the table here, and he's looking at those who've set up this trap, and saying, the breaking of the law or without sin is in

reference to the very exact same type of sin. Rampant throughout the ancient world was, in fact, adultery. What Jesus knows, which is also true now, is that there tended to be a double standard, often at the expense of women. Remember, the man's not here. They're holding this against the woman, not the man. They're comfortable not holding their buddies to the same standard. "What do we do with such women, Jesus? What do you say we do?" But Jesus knows it is very likely, and he knows the heart of all who are there, that they have also committed the same sin.

Or if they haven't committed the sin of adultery, then they are at minimum committing the sin of what the Bible calls partiality, in which they, as judge and accuser, are claiming it was because of the woman, not the man. So Jesus is upholding the law and says, "If you are without any of these sins, feel free to throw the first stone." They were the ones bringing the accusation. According to the Law of Moses, they would be the ones who have to take responsibility for what is played out. So either they had committed adultery, or they were actively committing partiality.

Jesus says, "What would you like to do?" because either way, without the man present, there's no way that they themselves are without sin. There's no chance because the man isn't there. He not only outwits them, but he humbly dignifies the woman, although not acquitting her. You see that, too. Justice and mercy will kiss, held together. How are they reconciled? Well, Jesus meets both of the people where they are. He confronts the religious leaders in the way they need to be confronted, but he also doesn't condone what the woman had done, even though it was unjustly brought before the crowd.

He confronted and forced the religious leaders to account for their failure; they each walked away one by one. It was a visceral scene. I imagine the rocks hitting the ground one after another as they realize they cannot carry out this accusation. Then Jesus turns to the woman in verse 10.

Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." vv. 10-11

I love this because Jesus' first address to the woman is to give her a chance to speak. "Woman, where are they? Have they not condemned you?" This woman was a silent pawn in the hands of the religious leaders, but to Jesus, she is a precious child of God. He gives her a voice and asks, "What would you say about this?"

I'm reading into the text, so this is an aside. This is not necessarily what we see in scripture, so take it with a grain of salt, but when she says, "No one condemns me," there's part of me that reads it as a confession. She doesn't justify. She doesn't say, "Yeah, but they broke in and trapped me." She doesn't try to say, "It was, it was just one time. It's fine. I'll never do it again." She doesn't try to escape it. She just says, "They haven't condemned me." Because in her mind, she recognizes she, too, is sinful. She did, in fact, commit adultery.

We don't know her story. We don't know her background. But I read this as a little bit of her owning up to it, at least in the moment: "They don't condemn me." Then Jesus takes that, whatever it is, and says, "Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin." Which is a beautiful response because he doesn't acquit the woman. He doesn't say, "Ah, you actually didn't do it." He doesn't remove the accusation, but at the same time, he doesn't condone it, meaning he doesn't acquit; he pardons.

That's very important because the pardoning of the woman is an extension of grace. It's an extension of saying, "Yes, you have sinned, and yet I pardon that sin." Ultimately, where this goes is Jesus taking on the very condemnation of this woman as he moves to the cross. He bears the weight of every single one of our sins. He does not acquit us of our sins; he pardons us. He takes it all in and says, "The condemnation that was due to you, I will take on me." That matters.

What also matters is Jesus' response. He doesn't say, "Go now and leave your life of sin, and then I don't condemn you." He pardons and then says, "Go and leave your life of sin." That, my friends, is the pattern of God from Genesis to Revelation. Think of Exodus. God moves into the people of God, rescues them out of slavery, liberates them, leads them out into a new way of life, and then gives the Ten Commandments.

The salvation and pardon are not something you earn by pleasing God. It's not something you earn by cleaning up your life and then God's like, "Okay, now I can forgive you." This woman is fully exposed, fully sinned, for everyone present, and first Jesus pardons her, and then says, "Go and leave your life of sin."

Why would he do that? Well, earlier in John, after our favorite verse, John 3:16, verse 17, says, "*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*" Church, we often get this wrong. We think God is angry, out there to condemn us. He wants to save you. The word "save," the same word for salvation, is the word *sozo*. It means healing, forgiveness, and salvation, only through the act of Jesus on the cross—all of those things. But don't miss that it means the healing of the soul.

What this woman needed in this moment was not condemnation, but healing. Yes, she had sinned. Yes, it was a conscious act. She was guilty before Jesus, and Jesus extended the healing touch of grace. Says, "Then I don't condemn you either. Go now and leave your life of sin."

Paul, later, riffing on this in Romans, would say, "It's the kindness of the Lord that leads to repentance." Do you remember the question I framed our whole time together with? What is Jesus like? What's the image that comes to mind when you think of Jesus? Put yourself in the place of this woman in this scene, caught in her sin, ashamed, and humiliated.

When you look at the eyes of Jesus, what do you see? Do you see the gentleness of Jesus? Or do you see a condemning, angry God who is so glad he caught you? Most of us carry these images around of God that come from a broken world in which we had authority figures in our lives that have distorted those things in our soul, and we map those onto God. It's the emotional state of ourselves. I'm disappointed in myself;

therefore, God also must be disappointed. My friends, that's a projection. That is not God.

What we see in this scene is a loving, gentle God, who looks at this woman filled with guilt and shame. "Woman, has no one condemned you? Neither do I. Go and leave your life of sin." This is another moment of speculation, but some scholars suggest that the only reason we know of this story is that she went off and told a bunch of people about it. I don't know if that's true, but it's quite beautiful because in that moment it was the kindness of God that led to repentance.

Dane C. Ortlund, a Reformed writer, wrote in the introduction to his book *Gentle and Lowly* that there's only one place in all of the Gospels where we learn what Jesus would describe as his inner disposition. In the Gospels, we learn a lot of things. We learn about his teachings, about the Kingdom of God, about Jesus' work and ministry, and about culture and society. We learn about his traveling and prayer habits. We find lengthy speeches and repeated objections by his hearers. We hear all sorts of different things about Jesus, but there's one place where Jesus opens up to us and tells us what his inner disposition is, and it's in the text we started with, Matthew 11. "*Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.*"

If you were to ask Jesus what he feels at the core of his being, it is gentleness and humility. That is how Jesus describes his inner disposition. Not power and might, not courage and honor and glory, not wisdom and intelligence, not holy and set apart. Jesus is every one of those things, but if you were to ask him what he feels at the core, it is gentleness and humbleness. Is that the image of Jesus that you have in your head? Is that what comes to mind when you, like this woman, are caught in your brokenness and sin? Or do you feel something different?

I was reminded all morning—I actually didn't have this in my notes—of when I was in middle school. I was a very angry child. I'd been caught up in all sorts of pain and hurt and was just in this mode where the world was seemingly out to get me, and I was consumed by this darkness.

I'll never forget the times I would just lay into my parents screaming, "I hate you; I hate you; I hate you." I remember at one point in that rage, my little wisp of a mom threw her arms around me and gave me a hug. It's the kindness of God that leads to repentance. In that moment of kindness, my life was different. It took a long time to move from my head to my heart what I experienced, but in that moment, I experienced the inner disposition of God expressed through my mom's gentle and humble heart.

It's that text a little bit later in Matthew 12, in which they're talking about the prophet Isaiah, and he says, speaking of Jesus, "*A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.*" I mean, a bruised reed. Jesus is so gentle in his disposition that he comes across a bruised branch, and he will not break it. A wick that's barely there, and he tends it back to life. Church, we become like the mental image of God that we hold.

For some of us this morning, we feel like the religious leaders. Maybe there's some of you here caught up with that religious zealotry of the sins of others, and you're so focused on their mistakes. The invitation is for you to be confronted and changed by the gentleness of Jesus. Maybe others of you are here, and you're like this woman. You're a bruised reed. You're a smoldering wick about to go out. Whether it's your own sin, the sins of others, you are caught at the feet of Jesus, filled with guilt and shame.

For you, the invitation is to look up into the eyes of Jesus and see the gentleness and humility that will extend you pardon, not acquittal, and walk with you towards the healing of your soul. It is likely that you're like me and are a mix of both. There are times when you find yourself in the religious leaders' shoes, other times in the woman's. May you let yourself become convinced that this is what Jesus is like.

I talked to a man in our congregation this week. He's in his late 80s, and just lost his wife of 57 years. He's walked with Jesus for quite some time, and he said something in passing that really stood out to me. I haven't been able to shake it. He said, "Kevin, my prayers have become very simple. They're thank you, and thy will be done. That is the testimony of a man who's been changed by the gentleness and humility of God. In the midst of great loss, he says, "My prayers are simple. Thank you, and thy will be done."

To close, I want to read an extended quote by Dane Ortlund from that book, *Gentle and Lowly*, which I recommend if you haven't read it.

Let Jesus draw you in through the loveliness of his heart. Let the heart of Jesus be something that is not only gentle towards you, but lovely to you. If I may put it this way, romance the heart of Jesus. All I mean is ponder him through his heart. Allow yourself to be allured. Why not build in your life unhurried quiet, where, among other disciplines, you consider the radiance of who he actually is, what animates him, what his deepest delight is? Why not give your soul room to be re-enchanted with Christ time and again? When you look at the glorious older saints in your church, how do you think they got there? Sound doctrine, yes. Resolute obedience, without a doubt. Suffering without becoming cynical, for sure. But maybe another reason, maybe the deepest reason, is that they have, over time, been won over in their deepest affections to a gentle Savior. Perhaps they have simply tasted over many years the surprise of a Christ for whom their very sins draw him in rather than push him away. Maybe they have not only known that Jesus loved them but felt it." Ortlund

Put yourself in that scene again. You're looking up to Jesus, surrounded by an angry mob, guilty of sin right before your Savior. What do you

see? "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest, for I am gentle and humble in heart."

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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