



Thrones
Leveraging Authority to Help Others Win
Part 11 – Leading with a Clear Conscience
Adam Donyes

Today is Palm Sunday and this is the beginning of Passion Week. It was fun when Ted gave me the assignment to do *Leading with a Clear Conscience*. A great author and theologian, C.S. Lewis, always said this about a conscience and I love it. “*Disobedience to conscience makes conscience blind.*” C.S. Lewis wrote a book called *Mere Christianity*, which is a very apologetic view. So, if you walked in here today and you don’t know if you believe in Jesus, you don’t know where you are at, maybe you would lean not all the way to the atheistic side of the pendulum, but maybe more the agnostic side, *Mere Christianity* is the book for you.

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis comes up with this idea that regardless if you believe in God or not, you can’t argue the fact that within all of us there is this moral code. He writes this in his first book and he talks about the moral law. I don’t have to teach my two-year-old to know hitting his brother is wrong. He knows by the response it evokes that it’s not right. So, when we were born, we innately have this inner code within us to know the difference between right and wrong. We still know there is something inside us that knows we shouldn’t do something because it’s wrong and there is something that overtakes us. That’s your conscience. C.S. Lewis would suggest that it’s your conscience that actually points you back to a creator. It’s Him who implanted it. And then we know that those who are regenerated believers get a stronger conscience known as the Holy Spirit.

For me and my life where this conscience applies... Maybe none of you have this with your spouse at all, but I have the best backseat driver in the world. A friend of mine told me this story. It was a wife and her husband’s name is Dave. She was taking her four-year-old to preschool. As she’s taking her four-year-old to preschool, she slammed on her brakes and, from the back, the four-year-old yells, “DAVE!” The wife who was driving asked the four-year-old, “Sweetie, why did you yell out Dave like that?” She said, “Mommy, every time daddy does that, that’s what you do.”

I’ve heard how fast some of you are willing to drive over the speed limit. It kind of gauges your sin tolerance. So, I’m hesitant to even share this with you guys, but I’ve been married to my wife for nine years and I’ve had no speeding tickets and no accidents. I can’t say the same on the other side of the marriage, but we’ll just keep that between us. But, it’s amazing how when you’re driving and you see a cop... What is the first thing you do? You put on the brakes or you check your speedometer if you have a clear conscience like I do. Not that I have a low sin tolerance, I’m just saying I refuse to go more than four miles over the speed limit because I’ve learned that I don’t get a ticket going four miles over the speed limit.

If you're a police officer in here, don't be waiting for me outside of this church service to give me a speeding ticket. I appreciate police officers. But, that's the first thing we do. Why? All of the sudden, the conscience that was already there... Your conscience was there when you were speeding. You already knew you were speeding, but now, all of the sudden, there is an extra check in your conscience to think *Wait a minute, I'm breaking the law.*

It's like those old cartoons we used to watch. You youngsters wouldn't remember this, but for those that grew up with the original Disney with Donald Duck, the devil Donald Duck would show up on his shoulder and the angel Donald Duck would show up on the other shoulder. That's really saying what our conscience is. And what it was teaching kids was that they needed to listen to the angel guy because the devil guy will always get you in trouble.

The definition of conscience is *the inner sense of what is right or wrong in ones conduct or motive, impelling one toward right action.* So, like I said, I don't know the spiritual temperature in this room. I don't know how many of you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. I don't know how many of you walked in for the first time saying, "What is this place? I heard they have a lot of fun. They gave me donuts when I walked in; so far so good." I don't know where you are, but I know all of us have a conscience. It's up to us whether we engage that inner conscience that moves us toward right action or we ignore it.

A French proverb says this: *"There is no pillow so soft as a clear conscience."* There might be some people in here that haven't slept well the last couple nights. That's because innately know they are not doing what they should be doing. Or they're not behaving as the husband they should be behaving as. They're not acting as the mom they should be acting as or the roommate or tax season is coming up and maybe you've cut some corners that only you know about and there's that little conscience that is saying, "Hey, what are you doing?" That's God caring for your soul as we will get into more.

Conscience affects me every day, conscience affects you every day and we need to see what God's word says about conscience. As we enter into Passion Week and as we look at what Passion Week is today... I alluded to you that today is Palm Sunday and I know you are not going to be able to read this from where you're sitting, but Corey is going to make these graphics available to us. How fun would that be if this family doesn't just leave here on Palm Sunday and live how they want to the rest of the week and then show up for Easter and have a great celebration here, which we will, but there are great devos of Bible verses you can be reading through. They're not long passages. We're talking two to three verses that you can just be anticipating Easter with this Holy Week, as it's known, or Passion Week.

Why is it called Palm Sunday? When Jesus ascended into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey, they had all these palm branches that were laid at the feet, but they were also fanning them saying, "Hosanna, Hosanna is the name of he who comes in the highest." They are proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah as he enters into Jerusalem, hence the palm branches and Palm Sunday.

Tomorrow, we know that Jesus curses the fig tree that had no fruit. He weeps over Jerusalem. He cleanses the Temple the second time. Then, on Tuesday, we find out that Jesus comes across the cursed fig tree that he prophesied against. Judas makes a deal with Jewish leaders to betray Jesus, which was

actually prophesied in Zechariah. You should study it sometime; it's fascinating. On Wednesday, none of the four gospels, none of the three synoptic gospels or the love gospel have any account of what took place on Wednesday. Maybe for you and your family, that's fasting from social media, maybe that's fasting from something, maybe that's being quiet and realigning your hearts with the Lord.

Then on Thursday, we see Peter and John find the room for The Passover and other preparations where Jesus served the disciples by washing their feet. Jesus was betrayed by Judas and Peter denies Jesus three times. Then Good Friday... It was great for us; it wasn't good for Jesus by any means. Jewish leaders condemned Jesus. Jesus is before Pilate. Jesus is beaten, scourged, mocked. Judas hangs himself. Jesus is crucified and dies and is buried before sunset.

When we get back to conscience today, we're actually going to take a little time to look into this trial with Barabbas. On Saturday, Pilate puts guards at the tomb with the Roman seal and then we'll all be here next Sunday to celebrate The Resurrection of Jesus Christ. I just wanted to give you guys a little historical and contextual background of what this week we are entering into is and why Palm Sunday is so special.

If you have your Bibles, turn to **Matthew 27**. If you don't, it will be up on the screen and you can just follow along with me. In the middle of this Passion Week, as I just showed you on Friday... You want to talk about a bad day? You might have had a bad week or a bad month, but this is the epitome of bad days. Jesus was betrayed by his best friends, abandoned by his best friends. He had to perform surgery by putting Malchus' ear on – who was somebody who was arresting him – after his impulsive friend, Peter, chopped it off. He was whipped, beaten, scourged, and wrongfully tried. Right now, we're stepping into the context of after he has already prayed in the garden, has already been arrested, has already been taken to the High Priest Caiaphas and was basically been sleep deprived. Now he's going before Pontius Pilate.

Just so you guys understand a little historical context... I didn't know any of this when I was a new believer. All of Jerusalem is under the rule of Rome here so they kind of despise Pilate. They have to pay taxes to Rome. It's kind of like what you see with a lot of the Caribbean Islands getting out of the British rule. There are similar things going on here. Jerusalem, Israel was under the rule of Rome. Pontius Pilate was a part of Rome under Cesar's rule and that's what's going on here.

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor... The governor here... If you read Mark or Luke, you'll find out that it was Pontius Pilate. **...and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"**

"You have said so," Jesus replied. We never see in scripture where Jesus doesn't respond in humility. He led out in humility. And not only that, but he had such a clear conscience that he doesn't feel the need to defend himself. What we learn from Jesus here is **people who are great never have to tell people how great they are.** If you have to tell people how great you are, you're probably not that great.

Many of you probably didn't see this movie and good for you that didn't because it scored a lot on Rotten Tomatoes. About ten years ago, there was movie that came out called Napoleon Dynamite. It's an awful movie. Good for you for those of you that have never seen it. In Napoleon Dynamite, which is

a very low budget film, filmed in Idaho, there was this certain character that all of us can relate to. His name was Uncle Rico. Uncle Rico loved to tell about his football glory days and how back in the day, he could throw the pigskin over a quarter mile. We all have those uncles. We all have those dads. We all have those grandpas who love to tell us about how great they were.

The beautiful thing is, as you think about how great Jesus was, he never had to tell anybody how great he is. Do you think Michael Jordan ever walks into a room and has to tell people how great he is? You see, a leader with a clear conscience never has to walk into a room and make sure everybody knows how great he is. He doesn't have to walk into a room and name-drop. He doesn't have to walk into a room and talk about all his accolades. He doesn't have to walk into a room and talk about how great he was back in the day when he walked to school uphill both ways in the snow, right? He doesn't have to do that because people who are great never have to tell people how great they are. And Jesus never had to do that.

12 When he was accused by the chief priests (Caiaphas) and the elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" Of course he did, but Jesus had a clear conscience. That's what makes him the most effective leader there ever was. He lived life with a clear conscience. He lived life by God's will, not his own will. We even see that as he prayed in the garden the night before all this went down. He prayed "Your will be done, not my will." Jesus led with a clear conscience, which made him an extremely effective leader. Of course Jesus knew what they were saying. Of course he knew what they were trying to do. **14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.**

I have a four-year-old who likes to beat up on his little two-year-old quite a bit. Any time I get after him, what does my four-year-old instantly do? He starts pointing fingers at a two-year-old who is much smaller and weaker than he is. He instantly feels like he needs to justify. Let me ask you a question this morning, Woodland Hills. When your conscience is seared or somebody calls you out or holds you to account, is this your response. Or do you have such a clear conscience and such a state of humility that you know, "I'm going to receive that?"

You guys know I have an extremely close relationship with Joe White. Joe White held me accountable with some stuff this week. I don't say this to boast at all. I say this because it was when I was actually studying this passage. If I wasn't, I probably wouldn't have had the same response. It was just perfect timing. All I said to Joe was, "I receive that. I need that. I receive that; thank you." I didn't need to make a reply. I didn't give him excuses why it wasn't done the way he asked. I didn't need to do any of that. I have a clear conscience, I'm righteous through Christ. "Yes, Joe, I receive that." How do you respond when a parent rebukes you, when a boss rebukes you, when someone in the church, an elder or pastor or marriage counselor, rebukes you?

14 But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge... By the way, as all of you know, not a single one of these charges were accurate. Not one of these charges had any weight to them. Jesus did nothing wrong. He was with no sin and he doesn't respond. Why? He has a clear conscience. He knows who his Father is. He knows the One who he will inevitably answer to. That's the crazy thing about leading with a clear conscience. We might think we will be able to get away with it for the short

term, but inevitable, all of us in this room, whether it's normal posture or unnatural posture, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess to who is Lord: Jesus. That's when our conscience will bear it's weight.

I love this next part. ...**to the great amazement of the governor.** Pontius was amazed. First of all, he has a really good feeling that this guy is innocent and he's not trying to defend himself. This goes against everything in the human DNA and he is just taking it. I love what George Martin said, for those of you who are Game of Thrones fans. *"A lion doesn't concern himself with the opinion of sheep."* We know in Revelation 5: 5 that Jesus is the Lion of the Tribe of Juda. And don't try to tell me this is oxymoronic. He was the lamb, not the sheep.

"A lion doesn't concern himself with the opinion of sheep." How does that apply to me? There are some toxic people out there in social media. There is not one message that I could give at Woodland Hills where one person doesn't love it and one person doesn't want to tear it apart. I just have to have a clear conscience before the Lord, know that I prepared, spending time with him, that I prepared my heart for speaking whatever God would lead me to speak to this body, and walk in that. So many times, we get caught up in what other people think and it affects our conscience. That's what happens to Pilate. Here, Pilate ends up caring more about what the Jews think rather than what he knows to be right because he's going to be warned again here in just a second. Galatian 1: 10 says this, Woodland Hills: ***Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.***

Matthew 27 goes on to say, ***15 Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd.*** Roman custom would do this every year to win favor with the Jewish people. The Jewish people already didn't like Rome so the least they could do to win favor with them, as they enter into the Passover and the celebrations and everything else that's going on, they would just give them one of the prisoners back. He was thinking. *This is our custom. This is a great opportunity for me to clear my conscience and give them back Jesus with him being the Messiah.*

16 At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. There was something very interesting about Barabbas here and the parallel between him and Jesus. Barabbas' name means "Son of the father." Jesus is the Son of the Most High. Isn't that crazy? The way God does this stuff just gets me so fired up. I love how creative he is in all this stuff.

17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them... You know what he's trying to do. He's like, *Hey let's take Barabbas; he's notorious and you guys know him; he's an insurrectionist, he's murderer, you guys know how awful this guy is.* He says, ***"Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?"*** It's important to note here that Pilate also doesn't recognize that Jesus is the Messiah. He's saying, "You call him the Messiah. We're not going to say he is the Messiah."

18 For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him. He knew that the only reason why they were handing Jesus over to him is because he threatened the Pharisees, he threatened the Sanhedrin, he threatened all their Jewish customs. Pilate knows he's no threat to Roman

rule. In no political realm was Jesus a threat to Roman rule. So, in Pilate's eyes, this man doesn't worry him at all; he has no impact.

The problem is Pilate knew the right thing to do. Back to our conscience and leading with a clear conscience. ***If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.*** - James 4:17 "I hate it when Donyes preaches; he always brings conviction to the table!" For those who know the right thing to do... I remind people all the time that Adam Donyes doesn't convict anybody; I don't have the power to do that. The Holy Spirit living inside of you or, for non-believers, for that conscience that sits on your shoulder, convicting you, that has nothing to do with me. So, as you sit here and you see this verse and God's word that's living and active as Hebrews 4: 12 suggests, right? The breath of God, Theopneustos, 2 Timothy 3:16... As that word penetrates your heart and you know the right thing to do, leaving here today. That's not on me. That's between you and the Almighty Creator. What a great week to walk into that with. What a great week, as we align our hearts and we come and experience victory next Sunday, as we come and experience an empty tomb next Sunday.

19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message... You have to know Roman and Greek back then. The Greeks and the Romans used to think that the Greek gods would speak to them through dreams. So, they didn't take dreams very lightly. His wife says, ***"Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."*** God is saying, "Hey, Pilate, you better listen to your conscience and since you're not really doing a great job of listening to your conscience right now, here, wife, go tell him this dream I just gave you because that man is innocent." But God's in control.

"God has many ways of giving checks to sinners, in their sinful pursuits, and it is great mercy to have such checks from Providence, from faithful friends, and from our own consciences. O do not this abdominal thing which the Lord hates! is what we hear said to us, when we are entering into temptation, if we will but regard it." – Matthew Henry

That's the beautiful thing. I believe it's in 1 Corinthians 10: 13 that it says that God always provides a way out. Anytime we are tempted or anytime there is sin or anything thrown our way, it says that God is faithful to always provide a way out. But, it's our responsibility to listen to that conscience as a leader of a company, as a leader of a family, as a leader of roommates, as a leader of college students that might be going off to a party. It's our responsibility to listen to that conscience that God has so blessed us with.

20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded... The Greek word here is *peitho*, which literally means to win over. So, all of these Jews won him over. They persuaded him so much and they got the crowd on their side. Here's what's crazy. I just told you what started Palm Sunday, the crowd, which was mainly Galilean coming into Jerusalem. Some of those Galileans and Jerusalemites would have worked their way into the Temple for this trial... The same people, not all, but some of the same people that are sitting there waving palms saying, "Hosanna, Hosanna," are now people that are about to be shouting something else. ***...the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.***

Peter Marshall says this: *“If you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.”* Pilate was not willing to stand for his conscience. He was not willing to stand for what he knew was right because a crowd of people who were persuading him in the opposite direction had more power over him because he cared what they thought. He thought if he didn’t have control of this crowd, what would Cesar think?

How many of you, in your work place or in your life, are dictated to and controlled by what other people think rather than what you know God is calling you to do or the confession or the walking in integrity that God has called you to live in? We have decisions every day. I get faced with decisions every week where I can compromise my integrity, but I’m not trying to win the approval over a crowd and I’m not trying win the approval over man. May my conscience always be held captive to the word of God. Even if everyone else is doing it, everyone else isn’t God’s standard for your life. The Word of God is God’s standard for your life and the beautiful thing is that when we fall short, the tomb is empty and we’re still forgiven.

21 “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor.

“Barabbas,” they answered.

22 “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked.

They all answered, “Crucify him!”

23 “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. Do you see the tearing of his conscience here? Do you see how he has the inability to lead as a good leader because he won’t pay attention to his conscience and so he’s not leading at all. Who is leading? The crowd is leading him. The crowd is leading his life; the crowd is in charge. He’s more swayed by what everybody thinks he is than by what God has already done in his conscience. We have no idea what happens to Pilate after these events. We have no idea if he ever confessed. We have no idea if he ever repented. We have no idea what happened after this, but I would think that because that conscience was strong that we might... And I don’t know this for sure, but we might see Pilate in heaven one day because of how deeply he went against his conscience and how convicting that can be.

Martin Luther says this: *“It’s neither right nor safe to go against my conscience.”*

Much like in a basketball game or a football game that you may have been to and all the sudden you hear the crowd start shouting, “Defense! Defense!” That’s what the crowds are doing now. ***But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”*** Now Pilate can’t even hear himself think. And now he’s been able to blind out his own conscience. He has gotten so inundated with the crowd and with everything they are saying and everything they are doing. He’s completely locked all that out.

You see, it’s a slippery slope when we begin ignoring our conscience. It’s a slippery slope when we begin living for the thoughts and approval of man, rather than what God is telling us in our spirit and in our conscience.

Now, we have found this out from Pilate. **When we lack a clear conscience, we lose the ability to lead well.** This whole series has been about leading, leveraging your authority. Whether that's a stay-at-home mom or at work or in ministry or in a job where you get to serve, or with your kids or with your roommates. Leveraging your authority to help others win.

I showed this video about two years ago, but when Ted asked me to touch a section between the Lord's Supper and the crucifixion, I thought I had to go back to this, especially since we just talked about Barabbas. I have to go back to this. Check out this video.

[Video plays]

We see the story of Jesus going to the cross, and everything seems to be kind of hand in hand, and there's this one character that seems to interrupt the narrative. His name is Barabbas. We don't even know much about him, except that he's a murderer, the leader of an insurrection, a rebel. Why he's even mentioned, sometimes I'm not so sure. It's like 'This is about Jesus going to the cross...'

So, in this moment, Pilate thinks 'I hold the destinies of these two men in my hands. I know the Jews have a tradition that on a holy day, I will release one of the prisoners on death row.' Pilate stands on this audacious stage who now presents Jesus, Son of God verses Barabbas the thug and rebel. And says "Alright, who do you want?"

This is blasphemy, this is gone too far, there's no comparison, this is a rightful prisoner, a man who should be on death row. He is a rebel against wrong, he leads a rebellion, he murders people. He's a bad man, a thug and a crook. He deserves the chains, and he deserves the crucifixion.

Jesus? What has He done but heal, restore, deliver, set free, open blind eyes, open deaf ears, heal the lame and the leper... What has Jesus done? Who do you want? "We want Barabbas, give us Barabbas."

People say "Give us Barabbas" and the soldiers come up and they put the key in they unlock Barabbas from his chains and shackles, and he walks down the platform. Welcomed by all of his thug friends. "Yeah, the people love me. I don't even know who this Jesus guy is, but all I know is my people love me." There seems to be no conscience in Barabbas. There's no record of him turning to Jesus and saying "I owe You everything now, for You have set me free." No. You don't see any of that in Barabbas. God knew that.

Jesus stood there silent, for He knew the will of His Father, and He said "It's fine Father, let them have Barabbas." For Jesus knew that the Father would have to treat Jesus like Barabbas, so he could treat Barabbas like Jesus. Barabbas thought it was the people that set him free... No, it was the love of a heavenly Father.

When I look at the story, I realize who Barabbas really is. That's me. That's you. That's us. And I was reading this the other day, and I felt God speak to me "I love Barabbas. I love him."

"But God, he is a bad man."

"I love him and I wanted him to go free."

"But didn't you know that he probably would have never acknowledged the free gift...?"

"Yeah... But I love Barabbas."

For while we were still sinners Christ died for us. God sent His Son for Barabbas, even the one he knew would walk away from Jesus and his free gift, and never come back. He loves Him. And the nerve, all the audacity of the believers to think 'I got saved by grace, but now that I'm in this deep, dark place of bondage, I better work hard to get myself out.'

WHAT?! That's the opposite of the gospel. Are you bound? Are you held under the power of this temptation, this sin? Do you feel like it's controlling you? What are you going to do? 'I'm going to shake myself free'...

Stop it. No, you won't. You're no match for the powers of hell, and the urges of sin. You will not overcome it and you'll never overcome it. You'll just be another statistic. There's no answer within yourself. Your own marriage, your own goodness, your own discipline, your own devotion will not save your marriage, it will not save your kids. There's only One and he's the One that took your place. He's the one that stood silently on the platform with Pilate and said "Yes, let them have Barabbas. Take Me."

How many times have I stood on that platform with Pilate and Jesus and I'm the Barabbas. And they start to take my chains off and I say "No! no! I deserve this. I deserve the guilt, I deserve the shame, I deserve the consequence. I deserve it."

And Jesus seems to look at me and say "No son, let me have it. Let me have your sin, let me have your pain" and I say "No God I did it to myself... I deserve it. My marriage won't make it; this is what I deserve. I deserve divorce. I deserve poverty. I deserve sickness. I deserve it all".

"God I'm so ashamed."

"Give me your shame..."

"But God, what if I do it again?"

"I'll still be here..."

"Oh, God I don't want to hurt you, I love you, I don't want to do this anymore."

"Give me your sin, son."

This is all we got, this is all I got and this is all you got. We can play games, we can play church games. We can pretend like some people are better than others, and that's why they're blessed. Or we can all come to the honest conclusion that it's God, and it's God alone. The greatest challenge is not your

discipline, your devotion, your focus. Your greatest challenge is believing the Gospel. Could it be that there's a God with a love so scandalous, so wide, so deep, so vast, so high, so expansive, so welcoming and so inclusive?

"Let me have your sin, My Child."

Okay, and I give Him my sin, and I stand in this empty space of forgiveness and acceptance while Jesus walks off to the cross that I deserve. I see Him, I see Him walking to the post to be whipped. As I stand a free man, all the attention is turned now; and I feel the love of God saying "Go, son, live your life! I'll pay the price." Where did we get off thinking that we were going to set ourselves free? It's still Jesus, it'll always be Jesus, it'll never stop being the power of Jesus. His blood is sufficient for your salvation. His blood is sufficient to sustain you, through every challenge and every sin and every temptation.

Jesus is enough.

[Video ends]

I can't tell you how many times I've watched that. He's enough. ***16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*** – John 3

I don't know where your conscience is today. I don't know what conviction the Spirit might be doing in your heart, but there is no condemnation from this stage and there is no condemnation in this church. I know Ted's heart beat and this church... We love you. The easy thing to do when our conscience is seared is try to suppress and try to ignore and try to push it aside. Don't let the enemy win that battle today. There's going to be a prayer team on both sides of the stage when Matt and his worship team comes back up here. There's going to be a prayer team in the Chapel. If the Spirit or the conscience God gave you, for the non-believers, spoke to you this morning, lay it at his feet. We walk into the Holy Week laying everything at his feet as we greatly anticipate an empty tomb, knowing that he tasted death so none of us in this room will ever have to taste it. That's the power of the gospel. That's the beauty of the gospel. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.

God, I'm overwhelmed by your love this morning. I'm overwhelmed by your goodness. I'm overwhelmed by what you did for us. You rode in humility on the foal of a donkey so that a bunch of undeserving people that fill this room, me in the front of the line, would never have to taste death. Jesus, I pray for consciences that were seared this morning or conviction of your Spirit at work. I pray that we live lives of transparency. I pray that we would have the strength to lay it all at your cross and know that there is freedom there, there's restoration, there's redemption, there's forgiveness. Thank you for this church body. Thank you for the elders. Thank you for the volunteers. Thank you for your goodness and your grace. Thank you for the cross. Thank you for the empty tomb.

It's in the matchless and mighty, high and holy name of Jesus we pray. And all God's people said... Amen.