



CONVICTED

A WORSHIP SERIES
FOR LENT

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WORSHIP KIT

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A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

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A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

About the Series

Convicted is a themed Lenten series that includes full worship liturgies and sermons that enable the congregation to step into a courtroom for Ash Wednesday and the following five weeks of Lent. Each Convicted service puts a different biblical person on trial, accused of an actual crime. An overall guiding question leads the arguments of each case while the congregation serves as the jury.

Participants: This series can be executed by as few as two leaders or by as many as desired. The sermon consists of two parts, one delivered by a prosecutor and one delivered by a defense attorney; these parts can be delivered by the same speaker or by two different speakers. If delivered by one speaker, the speaker is encouraged to view the preaching moment in such a way as to create and maintain two separate characters over the six weeks. One recommendation would be to enact a subtle costume change to distinguish between the prosecutor (a stern, austere, all-black clad character) and the defense attorney (easy going, smooth talking, grey coat/pink tie character). To further enhance the difference between the characters, even a change from contact lenses to glasses can be employed.

Setting: Visually, the sanctuary or worship space can be set up to resemble a courtroom. Two chairs can be placed on either side of the main aisle facing the chancel to represent the attorney's tables in a courtroom. If employing one speaker for both parts of the sermon, he can sit in one chair during worship before the sermon and switch seats to the other one after the sermon to differentiate between the characters.

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A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

Ash Wednesday: Defamation of Character

Newsletter Notice

Step into the courtroom each week in Lent with our Convicted worship series. Each service puts a different biblical person from the story of Christ's passion and death on trial, accused of an actual crime. On Ash Wednesday, we will look at the case against Jesus' disciples on the charge of defamation of character against the woman who anointed Jesus.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to court this Ash Wednesday as we look at the case against Jesus' disciples on the charge of defamation of character. We listen to the arguments for and against conviction and ask ourselves, "Would we be convicted of the charge of defamation of character against those for whom Christ died?"

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A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

Week 1: Dereliction of Duty

Newsletter Notice

Step into the courtroom once again in the next service in our Convicted worship series, in which a different biblical person from the story of Christ's passion and death is on trial in each service, accused of an actual crime. In this week's service, we will look at the case against Jesus' disciples on the charge of dereliction of duty.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to court as we look at the case against Jesus' disciples on the charge of dereliction of duty. We listen to the arguments for and against conviction and ask ourselves, "Would we be convicted of the charge of dereliction of duty in our discipleship of Christ?"

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A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

Week 2: Treason

Newsletter Notice

Step into the courtroom once again in the next service in our Convicted worship series, in which a different biblical person from the story of Christ's passion and death is on trial in each service, accused of an actual crime. In this week's service, we will look at the case against Judas on the charge of treason, a betrayal of trust against authority.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to court as we look at the case against Judas on the charge of treason, which is a betrayal of trust against authority. We listen to the arguments for and against conviction and ask ourselves, "Would we be convicted of treason, of betraying the trust and authority of Christ?"

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A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

Week 3: Perjury

Newsletter Notice

Step into the courtroom once again in the next service in our Convicted worship series, in which a different biblical person from the story of Christ's passion and death is on trial in each service, accused of an actual crime. In this week's service, we will look at the case against Peter on the charge of perjury, denying under an oath that he knew Jesus.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to court as we look at the case against Peter on the charge of perjury, lying under an oath that he did not know Jesus. We listen to the arguments for and against conviction and ask ourselves, "Would we be convicted of perjury, of denying to others our connection with Christ?"

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A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

Week 4: Obstruction of Justice

Newsletter Notice

Step into the courtroom once again in the next service in our Convicted worship series, in which a different biblical person from the story of Christ's passion and death is on trial in each service, accused of an actual crime. In this week's service, we will look at the case against Pontius Pilate on the charge of obstruction of justice, for not letting Jesus go free.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to court as we look at the case against Pontius Pilate on the charge of obstruction of justice in the trial of Jesus. We listen to the arguments for and against conviction and ask ourselves, "Would we be convicted of obstruction of justice, causing Jesus to go to the cross?"

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A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

Week 5: Rebellion

Newsletter Notice

Step into the courtroom once again in the next service in our Convicted worship series, in which a different biblical person from the story of Christ's passion and death is on trial in each service, accused of an actual crime. In this week's service, we will look at the case against Barabbas on the charge of rebellion.

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to court as we look at the case against Barabbas on the charge of rebellion. We listen to the arguments for and against conviction and ask ourselves, "Would we be convicted of rebellion against the kingdom of Christ?"

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Ash Wednesday: Defamation of Character

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CONVICTED

A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

Ash Wednesday: Defamation of Character

Order of Service

*Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world,
what she has done will be told in memory of her. Mark 14:9*

The Court Is Called To Order

- ☐ Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your presence here today. Your community and church thanks you for your willingness to serve on the jury these next six weeks. In the coming weeks, there will be six separate cases that will require you to think critically and to be impartial as you are presented evidence and arguments by the prosecution and defense. Before you can be certified formally as a jury, we must swear you in. Please raise your right hand and repeat after me:
- ☑ **I solemnly pledge to fulfill and uphold all the duties of a juror faithfully and objectively, and I do so with no reservations.**
- ☐ Upon this your solemn pledge, I now impanel you as the jury in these cases. Your honor, the jury is impaneled, and we're ready to begin. All rise, this court is now in session.

Jesus, I will ponder now
On your holy passion;
With your Spirit me endow
For such meditation.
Grant that I in love and faith
May the image cherish
Of your suff'ring, pain and death
That I may not perish.

Make me see your great distress,
Anguish and affliction,
Bonds and stripes and wretchedness
And your crucifixion;
Make me see how scourge and rod,
Spear and nails did wound you,
How for them you died, O God,
Who with thorns had crowned you.

Yet, O Lord, not thus alone
Make me see your passion,
But its cause to me make known
And its termination.
Ah! I also and my sin
Wrought your deep affliction,
This indeed the cause has been
Of your crucifixion.

Grant that I your passion view
With repentant grieving.
Let me not bring shame to you
By unholy living.
How could I refuse to shun
Ev'ry sinful pleasure
Since for me God's only Son
Suffered without measure!

Invocation (Isaiah 53:2-3, 12)

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Who has believed what he has heard from us?

C And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

P For he grew up before him like a young plant,

C And like a root out of dry ground;

P He had no form or majesty that we should look at him,

C And no beauty that we should desire him.

P He was despised and rejected by men,

C A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

P As one from whom men hide their faces

C He was despised, and we esteemed him not ...

P Yet he bore the sin of many,

C And makes intercession for the transgressors.

Apostles' Creed

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Children's Message

Hymn Der Am Kreuz 87 87 77 88

On my heart imprint your image,
Blessed Jesus, King of grace,
That life's riches, cares and pleasures
Never may your work erase;
Let the clear inscription be:
Jesus, crucified for me.
Is my life, my hope's foundation,
And my glory and salvation!

First Reading Romans 9:30-33

The Reading of the Charges Mark 14:3-9

Sermon Hymn Herzliebster Jesu 11 11 11 5

O dearest Jesus, what law hast thou broken
That such sharp sentence should on thee be spoken?
Of what great crime hast thou to make confession,
What dark transgression?

They crown thy head with thorns, they smite, they scourge thee;
With cruel mockings to the cross they urge thee;
They give thee gall to drink, they still decry thee;
They crucify thee.

Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish?
It is my sins for which thou, Lord, must languish;
Yea, all the wrath, the woe, thou dost inherit,
This I do merit.

The Prosecution: Oral Arguments

Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed his blood for me,
Died that I might live on high,
Lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine.
I am his, and he is mine.

Oh, the height of Jesus' love,
Higher than the heav'ns above,
Deeper than the depths of sea,
Lasting as eternity!
Love that found me—wondrous thought!
Found me when I sought him not.

The Defense: Oral Arguments

Confession of Sins

P O Lord, our Lord,

C You are compassionate beyond comparison,

P Loving beyond imagination,

C And faithful beyond our betrayal.

P Just as David declares, "My sin is ever before me,"

C We, too, admit our transgressions:

P We have become stained with wrongdoing,

C Sacrificing the goodness of your love for the fleeting wealth of this world.

P We have abandoned your commandments,

C Caring less for your creation and more for our own ambitions.

P Wash us clean, O God of mercy, and deliver us from ourselves.

C Help us to hear your voice calling us back,

P Remind us of your love bringing us home,

C And renew our spirits that we might trust you with our whole hearts.

The Verdict Is Rendered

P As a called and ordained servant of the Word I announce to you God's marvelous and amazing grace. You are forgiven, forever, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C Though our sins deserve conviction, we trust the forgiveness of God.

Offering

Prayers

P Lord God, sometimes our hearts are glazed over and hardened by grief,

C We wonder in the middle of our pain whether we can trust you or not.

P Sometimes, we even wonder if you are our enemy.

C Help us to take a long look at the hand you stretch out to us.

P Help us to make a choice for faith instead of despair.

C Help us to see that the hand you offer us is one that is scarred with pain.

P Help us to accept the comfort given by Jesus' bleeding love.

C Because we can't see you, O God, help us to listen, and listen closely.

P For your words give hope to the hopeless, courage to the fearful, and joy to the downcast.

C Chiefly, let us hear and believe these words for the ages, "Take, eat, this is my body. Take, drink, this is my blood."

P In your holy name we pray, Jesus.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Imposition of Ashes

Savior, when in dust to thee low we bow the adoring knee;
When, repentant, to the skies scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
O, by all thy pains and woe suffered once for us below,
Bending from thy throne on high, hear our penitential cry!

By thy helpless infant years, by thy life of want and tears,
By thy days of deep distress in the savage wilderness,
By the dread, mysterious hour of the insulting tempter's pow'r,
Turn, O turn a fav'ring eye: hear our penitential cry!

By thine hour of dire despair, by thine agony of prayer,
By the cross, the nail, the thorn, piercing spear, and torturing scorn,
By the gloom that veiled the skies o'er the dreadful sacrifice,
Listen to our humble sigh; hear our penitential cry!

By thy deep expiring groan, by the sad sepulchral stone,
By the vault whose dark abode held in vain the rising God,
O, from earth to heav'n restored, mighty, re-ascended Lord,
Bending from thy throne on high, hear our penitential cry!

Holy Communion

Benediction (Isaiah 61:1, 3; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

P “The LORD has anointed me ... to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,

C **The oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit.”**

P The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **Amen.**

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if thou abide with me!

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

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Ash Wednesday: Defamation of Character

Complete Script for Worship Leaders

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/jesus-on-trial-151613276>

- The **Theme Verse** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader at the start of the service or is read silently by the congregation before the service begins:

*Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world,
what she has done will be told in memory of her. Mark 14:9*

- **The Court Is Called To Order** is read responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

Ⓟ Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your presence here today. Your community and church thanks you for your willingness to serve on the jury these next six weeks. In the coming weeks, there will be six separate cases that will require you to think critically and to be impartial as you are presented evidence and arguments by the prosecution and defense. Before you can be certified formally as a jury, we must swear you in. Please raise your right hand and repeat after me:

Ⓞ **I solemnly pledge to fulfill and uphold all the duties of a juror faithfully and objectively, and I do so with no reservations.**

Ⓟ Upon this your solemn pledge, I now impanel you as the jury in these cases. Your honor, the jury is impaneled, and we're ready to begin. All rise, this court is now in session.

- **The Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Jesu Kreuz, Leiden Und Pein 76 76 D:

Jesus, I will ponder now
On your holy passion;
With your Spirit me endow
For such meditation.
Grant that I in love and faith
May the image cherish
Of your suff'ring, pain and death
That I may not perish.
Make me see your great distress,
Anguish and affliction,
Bonds and stripes and wretchedness
And your crucifixion;
Make me see how scourge and rod,
Spear and nails did wound you,
How for them you died, O God,
Who with thorns had crowned you.

Yet, O Lord, not thus alone
Make me see your passion,
But its cause to me make known
And its termination.
Ah! I also and my sin
Wrought your deep affliction;
This indeed the cause has been
Of your crucifixion.

Grant that I your passion view
With repentant grieving.
Let me not bring shame to you
By unholy living.
How could I refuse to shun
Ev'ry sinful pleasure
Since for me God's only Son
Suffered without measure!

- An **Invocation** (Isaiah 53:2-3, 12) is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Who has believed what he has heard from us?

C And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

P For he grew up before him like a young plant,

C And like a root out of dry ground;

P He had no form or majesty that we should look at him,

C And no beauty that we should desire him.

P He was despised and rejected by men,

C A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

P As one from whom men hide their faces

C He was despised, and we esteemed him not ...

Ⓟ Yet he bore the sin of many,

Ⓒ **And makes intercession for the transgressors.**

- The **Apostles' Creed** is spoken in unison by the congregation:

Ⓒ **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor:

Ⓟ Almighty and ever-living God, you love all that you have created and you forgive the sins of those who come to you with humble and contrite hearts. Create in us clean and honest hearts, so that, as we repent of our sins, we may receive full pardon and forgiveness; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

- The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ Boy and girls, welcome to the season of Lent. In our worship services during this season, we are going to be looking at the cases against different people in the story of Jesus' life, suffering, death and resurrection. Like in other court cases you might see on TV, we are going to try to figure out if these people are guilty or innocent of the crimes they are charged with.

Today we are looking at the case against Jesus' disciples on the charge of defamation of character. Defamation of character is a fancy way of saying that the disciples were not nice to people Jesus loved. Have there been times when you were not nice to your brother or sister or mom or dad or a classmate at school? (*Allow the children to respond.*) We have all done that at some time or other. That is called sin. And that is why Jesus came to die on the cross to forgive us of our sins.

During the season of Lent, we take time to think of the ways in which we have not treated each other well and we confess our wrong ways to Jesus. Then we are forgiven by him.

Lent is also a time for us to turn our lives around. That is actually what the word *repent* means, "to turn around." As forgiven people, we are now called by Christ to love one another

as he has loved us. It is a time for us to be nice to people, to help them and share with them and be friendly and kind, as Jesus is with us. It is a time to say good things about each other and not knock each other down. It is a time to hug someone and not hit them. It is a time to smile at people and not frown at them.

We all have a reason to rejoice. We have a Savior who loves us and went to the cross for us. So we need to show that joy in all we say and do. Take time this week to say something nice about someone else. And always remember that Jesus loves you and forgives you. Let us pray:

Help us, dear Jesus, to show love to others as you showed love to us. Amen.

- A **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Der Am Kreuz 87 87 77 88:

On my heart imprint your image,
Blessed Jesus, King of grace,
That life's riches, cares and pleasures
Never may your work erase;
Let the clear inscription be:
Jesus, crucified for me.
Is my life, my hope's foundation,
And my glory and salvation!

- The **First Reading**, Romans 9:30-33, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

- The **Reading of the Charges**, Mark 14:3-9, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always

have me. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”

- A **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Herzliebster Jesu 11 11 11 5:

O dearest Jesus, what law hast thou broken
That such sharp sentence should on thee be spoken?
Of what great crime hast thou to make confession,
What dark transgression?

They crown thy head with thorns, they smite, they scourge thee;
With cruel mockings to the cross they urge thee;
They give thee gall to drink, they still decry thee;
They crucify thee.

Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish?
It is my sins for which thou, Lord, must languish;
Yea, all the wrath, the woe, thou dost inherit,
This I do merit.

- **The Prosecution: Oral Arguments** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, having been sworn in as members of this jury, I thank you for your willingness to serve in this capacity during our time together.

I will, in the arguments that follow, show you beyond a reasonable doubt that the cases you’ll be asked to adjudicate can be seen through no other lens but that of a guilty verdict. I trust that you will keep your oath as jurors, and that your objectivity won’t be swayed by emotional pleas, but by the facts of the cases at hand. So we begin.

The case before you today concerns the disciples of Jesus. On a certain day, these twelve men were gathered with Jesus, sharing a meal, as we heard in the earlier reading. They were in the home of the well-known man, Simon the leper, when the action in question took place. We have the eyewitness testimony of those in the room, who say that a woman entered, carrying a very expensive jar of perfumed ointment. Breaking it open, she anointed Jesus of Nazareth. This woman displayed true faith in the claims of Jesus. Knowing the history of the Jewish people and the practice of anointing kings and prophets, she anoints Jesus by pouring this most expensive oil on his head, and so acknowledging him as King of the Jews, the Messiah. She confirms the anointed status of Jesus by making that known physically.

And how did these supposedly faithful disciples respond? In the sworn statement of Jesus’ follower Mark, who learned of the event from Peter, Jesus’ righthand disciple and an

eyewitness of the event in question, the disciples were indignant. “Why was this ointment wasted when it could have been sold and given to the poor?” These men sat in judgment over the faithful act of this woman, tarnishing her reputation and making light of what must have been a costly purchase, given to Jesus in faith.

It’s not just these words of the disciples that are troubling, ladies and gentlemen of the jury. These men, supposed “disciples” of Jesus, have a track record of indignant behavior that leads to defamation! The very crime these men are accused of has happened before! It’s a matter of public record that these same disciples tried to prevent children from coming to Jesus that he might touch them. They sat in judgment over little children, deeming them unworthy to be in the presence of Jesus!

Defamation is the act of falsely or unjustly injuring an individual’s good reputation. These men believed that the woman at the dinner made such a poor decision that she ought to endure their rebuke! But then again, jurors, don’t we all do that? It’s often our response to disagreements with others. We’re quick to write them off, even verbally rebuke them or write messages that show our disdain. In today’s world, we all are guilty of running to our respective corners of opinion and shouting at the top of our lungs, no matter the outcome. Forget listening or evaluating honestly. Snap decisions often guide our emotions, and our emotions guide our thoughts and words, spoken and written. Who in your life have you written off as unworthy of your love or the love of Jesus simply because of a particular action in which they have been caught? Could another’s faith possibly be expressed in a way that differs from your point of view, but is still valid? We quickly realize that we are just as guilty of defamation as these disciples. We play judge, jury and executioner over others, while conveniently forgetting to look in the mirror at ourselves. Even so, the facts of the case remain the same. These disciples of Jesus defamed what was clearly an act of faith. They rebuked a woman who didn’t deserve such treatment, treatment that was harmful to her reputation. The facts of the case can lead us to no other conclusion than to render a guilty verdict. Defamation of character has occurred.

Thank you, your honor, nothing further.

- A **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Gethsemane 77 77 77:

Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed his blood for me,
Died that I might live on high,
Lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine.
I am his, and he is mine.

Oh, the height of Jesus' love,
Higher than the heav'ns above,
Deeper than the depths of sea,
Lasting as eternity!
Love that found me—wondrous thought!
Found me when I sought him not.

- **The Defense: Oral Arguments** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ Thank you, your honor. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I also give you my thanks for your service.

To begin I'd like to ask a simple question: Have you ever been surprised by something? When you're surprised, how do you react? Some people simply don't say anything at all. They freeze as if they're in a fight-or-flight scenario, and simply don't or can't move. Others may be more verbal, and simply let out a scream. While it's difficult to figure out exactly how to interpret a scream, we can certainly understand it, given the circumstances. Then there are those, when surprised, who simply say the first thing that comes to mind. Whether good or bad, they simply express their initial reaction to the situation. People who have long-standing relationships with these individuals know not to hold them accountable for their initial reaction to a surprise.

What we have here today, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, is not defamation, but a court case based entirely on charges brought against these men for their surprised reaction to a stunning event. This is all just a simple misunderstanding. Imagine that you had spent three years traveling with a teacher who taught you valuable lessons—lessons such as avoiding materialism and caring for the needs of others, truly sharing all that you have and giving to the needy. When Jesus sent these disciples out on a teaching mission, he told them not even to carry a money bag! Simply the clothes on their backs would be enough.

It is true. The court record correctly states that a woman entered the home of Simon, carrying a jar. But let's stop right there, because already we have probable cause for concern. We see nothing in the record about an invitation to enter. We simply hear that a woman takes it upon herself to enter. This is a stunningly bold move! We are then told that she takes the jar she is carrying and breaks it open, causing a public scene! Not only does the strong scent of perfumed oil fill the room, she then pours the ointment on the head of Jesus while he and his disciples are trying to share a meal as Simon's invited guests!

So you see, ladies and gentlemen, this was simply the reaction of twelve men who had been trained to think of others first. Surprised though they were, they wanted to do the right thing with money that could have been earned through the sale of the perfume. I'm sure that even

all of you sometimes overreact and say or do things you wish you had not said or done. These men also made a simple mistake. They overreacted. That is not defamation of character. It is simply surprise, plain and simple.

What is more, Jesus offers both the woman and the disciples good news. He says that she has done a beautiful thing to him; she has anointed him for his burial. We're just beginning on our journey through these cases during Lent, but already Jesus has in mind the forgiveness that will come through his death, burial and resurrection. Using the ashes that will soon be on your foreheads, you are preparing for Jesus' burial, too. What a beautiful thing! Don't be surprised; take comfort in the event. Even though we may overreact to events, Jesus always has his plans in mind, even though we cannot yet know the outcome to such events. The burial for which the woman prepares Jesus will be undergone for the disciples, for the woman herself and for you as well! You will soon hear the words, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," but Jesus' burial didn't end for him in ashes and dust. His burial ended with a bodily resurrection that offers eternal benefits to all who, like this anointing woman, place their faith in him. So you see, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, these men aren't guilty of defamation. They have only expressed their surprise at the woman's actions.

Jesus uses their surprise to teach his disciples that they, and this woman, are not guilty. In the same way, you and I are declared not guilty through his death, burial and resurrection.

Thank you, your honor, nothing further.

- The **Confession of Sins** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P O Lord, our Lord,

C You are compassionate beyond comparison,

P Loving beyond imagination,

C And faithful beyond our betrayal.

P Just as David declares, "My sin is ever before me,"

C We, too, admit our transgressions:

P We have become stained with wrongdoing,

C Sacrificing the goodness of your love for the fleeting wealth of this world.

P We have abandoned your commandments,

C Caring less for your creation and more for our own ambitions.

P Wash us clean, O God of mercy, and deliver us from ourselves.

C Help us to hear your voice calling us back,

P Remind us of your love bringing us home,

C And renew our spirits that we might trust you with our whole hearts.

• **The Verdict Is Rendered** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P As a called and ordained servant of the Word I announce to you God's marvelous and amazing grace. You are forgiven, forever, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C Though our sins deserve conviction, we trust the forgiveness of God.

• The **Offering** is collected at this time.

• The **Prayers** are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Lord God, sometimes our hearts are glazed over and hardened by grief,

C We wonder in the middle of our pain whether we can trust you or not.

P Sometimes, we even wonder if you are our enemy.

C Help us to take a long look at the hand you stretch out to us.

P Help us to make a choice for faith instead of despair.

C Help us to see that the hand you offer us is one that is scarred with pain.

P Help us to accept the comfort given by Jesus' bleeding love.

C Because we can't see you, O God, help us to listen, and listen closely.

P For your words give hope to the hopeless, courage to the fearful, and joy to the downcast.

C Chiefly, let us hear and believe these words for the ages, "Take, eat, this is my body. Take, drink, this is my blood."

P In your holy name we pray, Jesus.

C Amen.

- The **Lord's Prayer** is spoken in unison.
- The **Imposition of Ashes** takes place during the following hymn, according to local custom.
- A **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Aberystwyth 77 77 D:

Savior, when in dust to thee low we bow the adoring knee;
 When, repentant, to the skies scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
 O, by all thy pains and woe suffered once for us below,
 Bending from thy throne on high, hear our penitential cry!

By thy helpless infant years, by thy life of want and tears,
 By thy days of deep distress in the savage wilderness,
 By the dread, mysterious hour of the insulting tempter's pow'r,
 Turn, O turn a fav'ring eye: hear our penitential cry!

By thine hour of dire despair, by thine agony of prayer,
 By the cross, the nail, the thorn, piercing spear, and torturing scorn,
 By the gloom that veiled the skies o'er the dreadful sacrifice,
 Listen to our humble sigh; hear our penitential cry!

By thy deep expiring groan, by the sad sepulchral stone,
 By the vault whose dark abode held in vain the rising God,
 O, from earth to heav'n restored, mighty, re-ascended Lord,
 Bending from thy throne on high, hear our penitential cry!

- **Holy Communion** is conducted, according local custom.
- The **Benediction** (Isaiah 61:1, 3; 2 Corinthians 13:14) is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P “The LORD has anointed me ... to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,

C **The oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit.”**

P The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **Amen.**

- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Eventide 10 10 10 10:

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if thou abide with me!

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

CONVICTED

A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT

Ash Wednesday: Defamation of Character

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Tune.....Jesu Kreuz, Leiden Und Pein 76 76 D

Measures 1-5 of the piano accompaniment for 'Jesu Kreuz, Leiden Und Pein'. The music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The right hand (treble clef) features a series of chords, while the left hand (bass clef) provides a steady accompaniment with chords and some eighth-note patterns.

Measures 6-10 of the piano accompaniment. The right hand continues with chords, and the left hand maintains the accompaniment pattern. A large, semi-transparent watermark 'Creative Communications' is overlaid across the middle of the page, partially obscuring the notation.

Measures 11-15 of the piano accompaniment. The right hand features a more active melodic line with eighth notes, while the left hand continues with chords. The watermark 'Creative Communications' is still visible, overlapping the notation.

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Jesu Kreuz, Leiden Und Pein 76 76 D:

Jesus, I will ponder now
 On your holy passion;
 With your Spirit me endow
 For such meditation.
 Grant that I in love and faith
 May the image cherish
 Of your suff'ring, pain and death
 That I may not perish.

Make me see your great distress,
 Anguish and affliction,
 Bonds and stripes and wretchedness
 And your crucifixion;
 Make me see how scourge and rod,
 Spear and nails did wound you,
 How for them you died, O God,
 Who with thorns had crowned you.

Yet, O Lord, not thus alone
 Make me see your passion,
 But its cause to me make known
 And its termination.
 Ah! I also and my sin
 Wrought your deep affliction;
 This indeed the cause has been
 Of your crucifixion.

Grant that I your passion view
 With repentant grieving.
 Let me not bring shame to you
 By unholy living.
 How could I refuse to shun
 Ev'ry sinful pleasure
 Since for me God's only Son
 Suffered without measure!

The image displays a musical score for the hymn 'Der Am Kreuz' in 4/4 time. The score is organized into two systems, each consisting of a treble staff and a bass staff. The first system contains the first two measures of the piece, and the second system contains the next two measures. The melody is primarily composed of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The bass line provides a steady accompaniment with chords and single notes. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'Creative Communications Sample' is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

- A **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Der Am Kreuz 87 87 77 88:

On my heart imprint your image,
Blessed Jesus, King of grace,
That life's riches, cares and pleasures
Never may your work erase;
Let the clear inscription be:
Jesus, crucified for me.
Is my life, my hope's foundation,
And my glory and salvation!

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