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Charges Dropped Against Watford Street Preacher

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"I am relieved that the police have finally confirmed what I knew from the beginning: I had committed no crime. I was peacefully preaching the gospel... Criticising Islam is not a criminal offence."

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Charges against Watford street preacher Steve Maile have been dropped, Hertfordshire Police confirmed in November 2026, seven months after the 66-year-old pastor was handcuffed and arrested on Watford High Street for preaching and criticising Islam. The Crown Prosecution Service decided there was insufficient evidence to take the case any further, and no further action will be taken against him.

He spent up to 12 hours in custody that day, held in double handcuffs, after a morning that began with hymns and ended in a police cell. For a grandfather who has preached on street corners for 45 years, it was a day he never expected to see in Britain.

Maile is the senior pastor of Oasis City Church in Watford, a father of four and a grandfather. He has preached in more than 50 countries over four and a half decades, and he has released five albums of his music and preaching.

What Happened On Watford High Street In April

The arrest occured on 18 April 2026, as he preached and sang hymns on Watford High Street. Part of what he said that day was criticism of Islam, and it was that criticism, he and his supporters say, that drew the police to him.

At first, officers also held him on suspicion of assaulting a teenager, an allegation he strongly denied. That allegation was quickly dropped, but a second matter remained: a racially and religiously aggravated public-order offence.

The two allegations were treated as seperate matters. One was dropped quickly. The other lingered for seven months, while the police file passed to prosecutors and the question of whether a street preacher could be charged for his words was weighed up behind closed doors.

Seven months is a long time to wait for an answer. Maile kept preaching while he waited, but the case hung over every sermon, every street corner, every hymn sung out loud in public.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

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