

“COURAGE BEFORE THE COUNCIL: I AM.”

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First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Text: Mark 14:53-65

Introduction.

For our guests allow me a brief explanation. We are preaching through Mark's gospel and we have come to the last couple of days of Jesus' life which will conclude with the resurrection on Easter morning. The fruit of this is considering again who Jesus is and all that He suffered and did for us and for our salvation.

Because of Jesus' work we can have the hope of being a work in progress. Jesus overcame evil with good so that we also in His strength can overcome evil with good.

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

We encounter another one of Mark's sandwiches, inserting one story between another one. We have a contrast here of the story of Peter's unfaithfulness surrounding the story of Jesus' faithfulness. We will save our business with Peter for next week and focus on the trial of Jesus before the Council of the Jews.

Mark 14:53-59

This gathering of the chief priests, the elders and the scribes is called the Sanhedrin. It's like a spiritual Supreme Court. This was the ruling body over the Jews and over the Temple. You have often heard me try to contextualize this for our day by calling them the senior pastors, the seminary professors and the denominational leaders.

Among other things they heard cases involving the violation of Jewish law. Jewish law was very clear about capital cases, cases that might involve the death penalty. There were many rules in place to insure justice.

The trial was required to be held only in daylight. Both sides of a case had to be heard, reasons for acquittal and reasons for conviction. If a guilty verdict was reached there had to be a second hearing the next day. Sentencing and execution could not be on the same day. Witnesses were required to be warned against rumor and hearsay.

Everything about this trial violates the laws for capital cases. Clearly they were in a hurry to kill Jesus and had no interest in justice whatsoever. This was a travesty of due process, a gross miscarriage justice.

Brothers and sisters, the servants are not above the master. I believe we will see more and more of this very thing in our day and it shouldn't surprise us. The godless will set themselves in judgment over the righteous. The writer of Ecclesiastes saw it a thousand years before Christ.

Ecclesiastes 10:5-6 There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler: 6 folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place.

The Son of God will be put on trial again and again even in our day and He will be mocked and spit on and killed again and again. They will seek to silence Jesus and His church.

Just as the leaders of the Jewish nation killed their own Messiah, the leaders of our nation will kill their only hope of life and salvation. We must be prepared to stand as His ambassadors. And we must prepare our children and our grandchildren for this kind of future.

Many false witnesses.

In order to be executed for a capital offense Jesus had to be found guilty of a capital offense, of breaking Jewish law. Jesus had been arrested without any charges. There was no indictment. So they needed to find one. It's a terrible day when law keepers encourage law breaking.

They were working feverishly to bring charges against Jesus but they couldn't get the witnesses to cooperate, their stories contradicted each other. Jewish law required two corroborating witnesses.

It's clear they weren't interested in justice or fairness at all. The verdict was pre-determined, they just needed some evidence to give it the appearance of justice. The attitude was don't bother us with the facts, our mind is already made up.

The only specific charge given was three years old, the one about destroy this temple and in three days rebuilding it. But they couldn't even agree on that charge.

Mark 14:58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'"

Matthew 26:61 "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'"

Mark 14:60-65

Finally the high priest asked a direct question: "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

Up until now Jesus had not made direct proclamations that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. Why not? He knew it would be misunderstood in political terms and He knew that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer. Now that the suffering had begun He openly divulges the truth.

Mark 14:62 “*I am*, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

Before the Jewish Supreme Court Jesus confessed He was the Messiah, the Christ from God, in a word, that He was God and then He added they would see Him one day seated at the right hand of God in the greatest Supreme Court of all, in heaven.

Listen carefully to what Jesus said to those blind judges, to those men who refused to believe.

First, He said they would have their eyes opened. “You deny that I am the Son of God now but you will see the Son of God.”

You think right now that I don’t have any power or kingdom or authority, but one day you will see me in my glory and you will see me with all power and dominion and authority.

Second, you will see Him seated. You sit here in judgment on me, you will see Him seated in judgment on you. This is not the last word. I may be the one on trial today, but the day is coming when I will judge all the earth including you.

Third, you say that I am a blasphemer for claiming to be equal with God. But one day you will see that not only am I in the presence of God but I have the place of honor at the right hand of God. You will see this.

Fourth, you say that I am guilty and must die. You will see me again alive and coming on the clouds. You will see the temple destroyed and in three days raised up again. You will see me come in great power and glory. You will see.

This is a powerful thing Jesus said. Because they rejected Jesus they forfeited their right to be the leaders of God’s people. From now on Jesus will occupy the seat of judgment. They will be judged by Jesus. Jesus is announcing a new day, when the old Israel will pass away and be replaced by a new Israel who will have a new high priest seated in the heavenlies.

The Jewish leaders were without excuse, Jesus told them plainly who he was. And He told them plainly they would one day see Him in all His glory and greatness.

If they didn’t believe it wasn’t because they weren’t told. If we here don’t believe it isn’t because we haven’t been told.

We don't need more proof of Jesus. We need to believe the truth we know in the depths of our heart. We need to believe it for every aspect of our lives and for everything in our future.

The reality is *Jesus is coming again* on the clouds in majesty and power as Conqueror, Judge and King.

The Jesus that we believe is not just the Jesus who lived and died for us and rose again and ascended to heaven. The Jesus we believe is also coming again to gather all His people to glory and to great reward and to punish forever all His enemies and those who deny Him.

If when we think of Jesus we think only of the cross, then we don't think enough. After the first advent there will be a second advent.

I Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

Mark 13:27 And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

Matthew 26:32 Before him will be gathered all the nations ...

The future you are planning for is too little and insignificant if it isn't clearly fixed on that day when Jesus comes in power and glory on the clouds with the hosts of angels to gather His people to Himself. Paul adds these words in Thessalonians:

I Thessalonians 4:16-18 *Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

Let these words be a comfort to every Christian. As you strive to make progress in your faith, as you strive to be a work in progress, encourage each other with these words. However hard the work is now be joyful in hope and patient in affliction. Remind each other Jesus is coming.

Whatever we suffer in this life, we will be seated with Him in glory forever. For this joy set before you, patiently endure whatever lies in the path to that glory and joy.

The day of sin and evil is quickly coming to an end. Be of good hope and courage.

Spitting, mocking, hitting.

For Jesus the day of sin and evil was just getting started. His words only made them more hard hearted and drove them deeper into rebellion. Once again we see what evil men mean to be for evil, God uses to bring about His own good ends.

You have heard the phrases in the Miranda Rights that anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.

Well, there was no longer any need for witnesses, they had their evidence for a charge of blasphemy against God. The testimony they were looking for against Jesus from the false witnesses in the end was provided by Jesus Himself. The court quickly passes the death sentence. The die is cast.

As a final act of dishonor and shame, they all spit on Jesus, which by itself is a foul form of disgrace. It's a disgusting thing to do and a disgusting thing to experience. Then they blindfolded Him and hit Him and told Him to prophecy who it was that struck Him.

It was bad enough to be arrested and accused falsely and slandered at the hand of enemies, treated like a criminal and a prisoner. But now this, adding insult to injury.

Such was the depth of our Savior's love for us that He endured the worst for us. He who could cast out demons with a single word, who could have called down twelve legions of angels in a word and destroyed them all in an instant, He patiently endured their wrath, to drink the cup to the dregs.

Our salvation was purchased at the cost of the most severe humiliation and human degradation.

For the sake of the joy of our salvation, He endured all the shame and humiliation on the way to the cross.

Application and Conclusion.

Our faith and our salvation rests on a foundation of the Son of God being arrested as a criminal, bound in chains, forcibly led into a mockery of a trial, forced to endure the degradation of the worst kinds of humiliation.

Our faith and our salvation rests on a completely innocent man being unjustly sentence to death, unjustly receiving the sentence we justly deserved. He did nothing wrong.

He was bound that we might be loosed. He was emptied that we might be full. He was made poor that we might be rich. He was struck down that we might be raised up. He was made a curse that we might be blessed. He was imprisoned that we might be delivered. He did not spare Himself that we might be spared.

The Father gave us His Son. The Son gave us His life. He gave Himself for us that we might give ourselves for Him.

Hallelujah, what a Savior!