

The Lord's Message: Journey to the Cross: Jesus Is Tried and Sentenced

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Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Matthew 26:57-68

How many of you have ever served on the jury for a trial? I served one time before I went into the ministry. I have received jury trial notices, but when I go to court and they ask me, "What is your occupation?" and I say, "I am a pastor of a church." I get quickly dismissed. You would think that they would want someone of integrity who would weigh the facts of the case to come up with a decision. Well, we are going to find out in the Jesus trial by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Ruling Council, that they did not want people of integrity either.

Let us pray.

We are continuing our sermon series, Journey to the Cross. This week we are looking at Jesus being tried and sentenced. Please turn in your Bibles to **Matthew 26:57**. If we remember last week, Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and brought to Annas the father-in law of the high priest Caiaphas. Does anybody recall the charges for Jesus' arrest? What Jesus has done for them to arrest Him? I cannot believe that you forgot what the charges were for Jesus' arrest. There were none. They simply went and arrested Jesus without any charges against Him.

Annas was the former high priest. They brought Jesus to Annas' house for Annas to question Jesus, so that Annas could shape the outcome of Jesus' trial. Annas was trying to find something to charge Jesus with. Annas could not. In verse 57, they then brought Jesus to Caiaphas where not only Caiaphas was there, but the teachers of the law and the elders. Look at verse 59. Was this going to be a fair trial for Jesus? No! In verse 60, they could not find anything to charge Jesus with. Jesus has now been questioned by the former chief priest, Annas, and a line of false witnesses, but no evidence is found that Jesus committed any crime which would be punishable by death.

God set up the court to be impartial, truthful, and just. In **Deuteronomy 16:18-20**, this is the conduct of the judges. God also gave requirements for the eyewitnesses' accounts in **Deuteronomy 17:6-7**. If you are going to accuse a person that has committed a crime where the punishment is death, then you are to throw the first stone. That is what Jesus was telling the men gathered around the woman accused of adultery in **John 8:7**. The result is in **John 8:9**, that all the men left, because none were innocent of sin. The evidence has to come from two or three witnesses whose statements agree that the crime has been committed. In **Deuteronomy 25:1-3**, there also must be fair sentencing. The judges need to be impartial. The eyewitnesses need to be truthful. The sentencing needs to be just.

Let us see how Jesus' trial unfolds. We will pick up at the end of verse 60 in Matthew 26. Two eyewitnesses have come forward. They report what they heard Jesus say in verse 61. The actual quote of Jesus is found in **John 2:19**. Jesus never said that He was going to destroy the temple in Jerusalem. In **John 2:21-22**, the temple, He was referring to His body, not the temple in Jerusalem. But even this accusation was not worthy enough for Jesus' punishment to be death.

In verse 62, all through these eyewitnesses' false testimonies, the chief priest, Caiaphas, has been waiting for Jesus to lash out at them, so that he can find evidence to convict Jesus of a crime that is worthy of the death penalty. I would also like to remind us that the Sanhedrin cannot carry out a death penalty, because they are occupied by Rome. Only the Romans can carry out the death penalty, so the Sanhedrin must have evidence so that Rome would be forced to carry out the death penalty.

How does Jesus handle all of this? In verse 63a, it says that He remained silent. This fulfills the prophecy in **Isaiah 53:7**.

It is only after Caiaphas charges Jesus under oath in verse 63b, with "Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God." The word Christ is translated as Messiah. This is when Jesus speaks, "Yes, it is as you say." Caiaphas is confirming that Jesus is the Messiah.

At the end of this verse, Jesus tells Caiaphas that "In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." This is a direct quote from **Daniel 7:13-14**. Jesus is the Messianic King. He will have victory over the cross. Despite this mocked up trial, Jesus will be vindicated. Taking His place in heaven, He will judge all those who condemned Him. Paul says in **Philippians 2:9-10**.

After Jesus said this, finally the high priest had something to pin the death penalty on Jesus, “blasphemy.” In verses 65-66, look at the reaction of the high priest and the council. In verse 67, the mockery and insults hurled at Jesus was just beginning.

Was Jesus’ trial impartial, truthful, and just? No! Who is on trial? Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. Those who refused to accept Jesus as the Son of God. This trial was not about Jesus, but about those who refuse to believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

For us today, there is a cost for following Christ. Every day, there are people who will mock and ridicule us. Those people may be in our own family. I know. I deal with it in my own family. I love them so much that I want them to know and love Jesus. What do I do? I continue to live my life in the Lord in front of them. I try to be there for them when they are facing hardships. I pray for them. As followers of Jesus, we need to continue to be faithful, despite the trials that others may put us through.

So, let us continue to listen to God and do what He says. Amen.