

Mark 14:53-65

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Preacher: None

[0:00] Pick up your Bibles again. And back to Mark 14.! Deep into the darkness of Jesus' suffering and closer to the pain of the cross.

And we saw last week that all of these events, everything that's happening this night, it's not just coincidental. These aren't just random events. And these aren't just events just to get us to the cross.

And it's only at the cross that Jesus saves us. No. That's where his suffering climax is on the cross. So you can think of it like this. If the cross is like the peak of a pyramid, the top of a pyramid, all these events we've seen the night before, these are kind of like the building blocks below the top of the pyramid.

You can't have the top of the pyramid without the layers below. It's all one piece of suffering and saving. All these elements in this night are really necessary.

Another way to think of it is, if the cross at Calvary is a big earthquake, and there was an earthquake at Calvary, if the cross is an earthquake, these events the night before, they're kind of like warning tremors beforehand.

[1:39] They're all a part of the event. And they tell me what's coming. And the tremors tonight are getting bigger. The night is getting darker.

And where do we find ourselves tonight? In our courtroom. We're in the Jewish court called the Sanhedrin. And this is where the priests and the scribes would gather to determine religious laws, and to see whether or not someone had broken Jewish or Old Testament laws.

And this court was for really big cases. This is where God's priests judge God's people. And so you can see who's there in verse 53. There's the high priest and all the chief priests, and the elders and the scribes, they came together.

And in verse 55, so there was a whole council gathered. So this isn't just a few guys having a meeting. This is the Jewish leadership meeting in the Jewish council city, in the Jewish Supreme Court, holding the scales of justice to judge God's people.

And who is in the dock tonight? Whose life is being weighed here? Who's the suspect? Look at verse 53. And they led Jesus to the high priest.

[2:58] This is a shocking scene. They bring Jesus in. It's a shocking scene, but it's not a surprising scene. Because we've been waiting for this in Mark's Gospel.

Jesus has already, previously in the Gospel, foretold the future, and said something like this is going to happen. So, if you flip with me back to chapter 8, verse 31, chapter 8, verse 31, it says, And he began to teach them, that's the disciples, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

If you look ahead to 10, verse 33, chapter 10, verse 33, Jesus says, See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests, and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him over to the Gentiles.

Jesus says, All this will happen. And tonight, all these puzzle pieces are falling into place. So, we know exactly what's going on here. Jesus is here to suffer, and be condemned.

So, although this is a courthouse, tonight, we know that this isn't going to end well. So, this isn't really a courthouse. This is a slaughterhouse.

[4:29] Jesus is here to die. And did you notice, he was just outside, in verse 54, and Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest, and he was sitting with the guards, and

warming himself with fire.

I want you to picture Peter, just outside his courthouse, in the courtyard, the whole time, warming himself by the fire. trying to listen in to what's happening.

And I want us to join in with Peter tonight, to stand outside the courthouse, and I want us to press our ears up against the windows of the courthouse. And I want us to listen to how this unfolds.

And so, as we do that, we begin to hear something. And this is the first thing we discover, my first point tonight, Jesus is innocent. Jesus is innocent. So this is a slaughterhouse, not a courthouse. And we can see this, because this isn't a fair trial. Look at verse 55. Now the chief priest and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus, to put him to death.

[5:44] They already had the verdict in mind here. They already knew what was going to be the outcome. guilty and worthy of death. And they were all gathered here tonight, just to make it happen.

The term for this is a kangaroo court, meaning it's a corrupt court. It's a sham. They all came into this court, not to seek justice, not to seek truth.

But what does it say? They were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death. They were seeking the verdict they'd already figured out in their heads. And so they had to do this by bearing false witness.

The witnesses were called up to give evidence about Jesus, and in verse 56, many bore false witness against him. False witness.

In other words, they were lying. They were making stuff up about Jesus to make him look guilty. They were saying, I heard Jesus did this awful thing.

[6:49] They were saying, I saw him do this, actually, as well. They were saying, oh Jesus, yeah, yeah, he's definitely not to no good. He did this and that. And then Mark gets specific.

Look at verse 57. And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, 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.

And now we've got to ask, did Jesus say this? Well, no. We don't have it written here in Mark, but in John's Gospel, Jesus says this, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

But do you see what they do with Jesus' words here? They've made it sound like he's been threatening to destroy the temple. So look at verse 58 again.

We heard him say, I will destroy this temple. He didn't say that. They're twisting his words. They're making him sound like a terrorist, like he threatened to destroy the temple.

[7:57] But Jesus did no such thing. This is a false witness. This is lies. And so you have a whole judge and court and jury all against Jesus.

Everyone planning and plotting to make him look guilty in the eyes of the Lord. And how does this all land? Well, look how verse 55 ends.

They were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. Verse 56. For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.

Verse 59. Multiple people spoke about this temple incident. 59. Yet even about this, their testimony did not agree. Everyone is firing shots at Jesus, mudslinging, giving everything they've got.

But nothing is sticking. Nothing's sticking. Even when they're trying to make their stories match and conspire against him and trying to coordinate all these lies, even when the whole court is stacked against him, they have nothing on Jesus.

[9:13] Have you ever seen those, on adverts and YouTube videos, water-resistant spray, or hydrophobic spray, have you ever seen that?

It's like a spray that you can spray on a coat, you can spray on anything, and it makes it really water-resistant, so you throw water on it, it just slides off. You throw, like, juice on it, it slides off mud, nothing.

And so that coat becomes water-resistant, and that's a bit like what's going on here with Jesus. Jesus is blame-resistant. They're firing everything at him, all this dirt, but nothing sticks in him.

All these lies don't add up. And that's in part because lies never add up. Lies never make sense or agree.

And that's the nature of how truth works. So truth and true statements, they add up. They fit together. They never contradict.

[10:15] Truth always agrees with truth. Two true statements always work together. The truth, you can think of it as harmonious. But a lie, it never works with the truth.

It contradicts it. It disagrees with the truth. It's inconsistent. It never works. So, think of it. The true statement, Jesus never made a threat.

And the false statement, Jesus made a threat. They both can't be true, can they? That's how truth works. Falsity, lies, can't work with the truth.

The lie just doesn't hold up. It doesn't work. It always collapses. So, no wonder they didn't find any bad testimony against Jesus. No wonder their testimonies didn't agree.

Because lies don't agree. Lies don't hold up or work. But it's also because Jesus never, ever, once in his life, did anything wrong.

[11:22] Jesus never, ever, broke the law. Jesus never did anything anyone can ever bring up in court and say, guilty.

Our Saviour was truly sinless. And he was so pure and so blameless that they couldn't make him guilty even if they tried.

They're trying their hardest but nothing could stain the sinless Saviour. Conspire against him with all you've got. There is no fault in Jesus.

Jesus is perfect. And so, as they face this perfect suspect, the court is frustrated and actually there's still some integrity to the court here because with all these testimonies not adding up and things not squaring, the court just doesn't accept them but they can't accept them because they're not making sense.

The case can't continue and so they keep pushing, they're just waiting for that piece of evidence or a testimony that might somehow show a glimmer of guilt.

[12:37] and so the high priest who's kind of like the moderator or the manager of the meeting, he stands up and intervenes in verse 16 and the high priest stood up and admits and asked Jesus, have you no answer to make?

What is it that these men testify against you? But he remained silent and made no answer. In all this chaos and mudslinging and lies, what is Jesus doing?

He's silent. And this is my next point, Jesus was silent. Jesus was silent. If this was happening against you, all these allegations and made up stories, what do you imagine you would do?

I think we all probably want to speak up and say, hold on, that isn't true. No, no, no, I didn't say that. Wait, you're twisting my words there.

Look, he said one thing and he's saying another. That doesn't make sense. What's going on here? All this isn't right. We would defend ourselves, wouldn't we?

[13:49] We'd stop this kangaroo court. We want to expose this nonsense, these lies. But Jesus doesn't do that. Instead, verse 61, he remains silent.

and made no answer. Jesus is silent. Press your ear up against that window again. Silence.

He just takes it. He doesn't protest. He doesn't defend himself. He doesn't expose their lies. He so easily could. He's silent.

And why? Well, in one sense, it doesn't matter if he defends himself or proves the truth. They're not there to reason or listen to Jesus.

They've already made up their lies. So it's no use saying anything. But more importantly, Jesus is silent on purpose. His silence isn't him folding his arms, refusing to be there, holding a grudge.

[14:54] No, he's silent. He's willingly silent. He willingly takes these lies. He's willing to take this judgment.

He's willing to go where these lies and these lying men take him. This silence is Jesus willingly laying down his life to die.

His silence speaks volumes. Isaiah 53 speaks of Jesus. It says, like a lamb led to the slaughter, he did not open his mouth.

This silence is Jesus, the sacrificial lamb, offering himself to ransom his people from sin. And so it's no coincidence that this takes place on the night of the Passover.

It's no coincidence that Jesus is crucified on the Passover. Jesus offered himself as the Passover lamb to redeem us from sin. And do you know who's meant to offer the lamb on the Passover?

[16:04] It's the high priest. So Jesus is the lamb because he's offering himself. He's the sacrifice. But also he's the one offering himself.

He's also the high priest. Jesus is the great high priest here who's offering himself the Passover lamb to deal with sin.

him. And so there's a great irony in this room. In this council there's the high priest trying to put Jesus to death. Not knowing that the whole time Jesus is the true Passover lamb.

And all the while Jesus, the true high priest, he's offering himself as the once-for-all sacrificial lamb who takes away the sins of the world. This silence speaks volumes.

And so if you keep pressing your ear up against that window, and if you listen carefully, this silence is the silence of the lamb and the silence of the high priest.

[17:14] But he doesn't remain silent forever. Because look what happens next in verse 61. Verse 61, again, the high priest asked him, are you the Christ, the son of the blessed?

And then the silence breaks. Jesus faces the courthouse and says in verse 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.

This is where my third point begins. Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is the Christ. Now this moment is a huge moment.

moment. And these words are astonishing. But it's not a huge moment just because he's broken the silence. But this is a huge moment in Mark's gospel because this is the first time Jesus says publicly in the open that he is the Christ.

Before this, throughout the gospel, it's implied that Jesus is the Christ. In fact, his actions clearly show it. Peter in chapter 8 even confesses that Jesus is the Christ.

[18:28] But Jesus says to him, let's not make that public. Keep that quiet. Jesus had to keep his identity veiled and hidden slightly. King. And that's mainly because if he came out straight away, beginning his ministry and said, I am the Christ and everyone knew it, two things could happen.

Either people would rush in and quickly make him king straight away, which would mean he would avoid the cross, which he has to go to. Or the Roman authorities might come along and they would hear of it, seize him straight away and stop his ministry and likely he would be killed too early.

And so Jesus had to wait to reveal his true identity. And he had to go to the cross. Now, in this courtroom, the time is right.

And so the high priest gets straight to the point, what everyone is wondering in this courtroom, he says, Jesus, are you the Christ, the son of the blessed? And this is a massive question.

It's hard to appreciate how big this question is. He's asking, are you the one God promised in the Garden of Eden to crush the head of the serpent? Are you the promised king from the line of Judah?

[19:51] Are you the prophet greater than Moses who we've been all waiting for? Are you the eternal king who sits on David's throne? Are you the one who's come to bring peace on earth?

Are you the one who takes away the sins of Israel? Are you the one who will stand before the ancient of days and be given an everlasting kingdom? Jesus, is that you?

And Jesus declares in front of the whole courthouse, I am. man, I am the Christ. I am the one the world has been waiting for.

The Christ, the true king of Israel, stands in their midst. But Jesus doesn't stop there. He continues verse 16. He says to them, and you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.

Now Jesus refers to two Old Testament passages here. He calls himself the son of man, who's a figure in Daniel 7. And that figure also comes with the clouds of heaven before God.

[20:57] And in that scene, God gives him a dominion and glory and everlasting kingdom. And being seated at the right hand of power, power is just a term for God here, because God is power, he's powerful.

This is a term from Psalm 110, where the right hand is the place of highest honour by God. It's essentially a throne where someone will rule from.

So these words Jesus says here are all about authority and power. Jesus is saying to this courtroom, yes, I am the Christ, and you will see me being given all authority by God. You will see me enthroned, and I will be king over all. He says in front of the highest authority in Israel, the Supreme Court and the law makers all around him, as they judge him and poke their fingers and stand above him, he says to them, you think you're in charge here? No. I'm the real authority in this room. I'm in charge here. I am your king. And then he says, in those words, he says you will see, you will see all this to them.

[22:15] So let's ask, when will they see this? Well, it's his resurrection and his ascension. Only in a few days' time, Jesus will rise from the dead as the everlasting king, the risen Lord of lords.

And he will be taken into heaven and seated at God's right hand where he will rule over all creation. In fact, he is ruling right now over all creation at God's right hand. And so who is in charge in this room?

Jesus is in charge. Who's in charge right now? Jesus is in charge. But why does Jesus say this? It's true, but this is obviously like throwing a grenade into the middle of the room, isn't it?

This doesn't go well as we'll see, but why does he start to fire like this? Well, he does this because they need to know. It means that they won't condemn him not knowing that he is the Christ.

They can't say, oh, we never asked him. Oh, we never knew. At least they know now. No one in this room has an excuse.

[23:27] Things are very clear now. They are judging the Christ. So he wasn't mistaken. He wasn't confused for someone else. No, they know he's the Christ.

Jesus died and was condemned as the Christ. So Jesus says these words, but they don't bow down to him.

They don't tremble before him as they should. But as we press our ears up against even more, we hear instead that Jesus is condemned.

And this is my final point tonight. Jesus is condemned. Jesus is condemned. Look how they respond to Jesus' words in verse 63. And the high priest tore his garments and said, what further witness do we need?

You've heard his blasphemy. What is your decision? And they all condemned him as deserving death. The high priest was furious. He calls it blasphemy.

[24:30] He says, this man claims to be the Christ. He's dishonoured God's name by claiming to be the Christ. He's made himself king over all. And only God can do that.

He's making a mockery of God's majesty here. And that technically is blasphemy. And that's because, they're saying it's blasphemy because they've already made up their mind that he's not the Christ.

This technically wouldn't be blasphemy, or isn't blasphemy, because he is the Christ. It would be blasphemy if he wasn't, but he is. Everything he said is 100% true.

But they don't care. They've already made up their powers. Their hearts are hardened. They cannot see the Christ who's right in front of them. And so they do what they've been waiting for all along. They all condemned him as deserving death. The sentence is passed. The juries read out their decision. This Jesus is a blasphemer, a sinner, and he deserves death.

[25:40] And this is where we feel the tremors of the cross more vividly. Jesus was condemned under God's curse on the cross. He was punished as a blasphemer and a sinner under God's wrath.

He was made sin on the cross. He was numbered among the transgressors on the cross. And that's the epicentral of it all. But we're feeling the tremors of that here.

Because he was so under the curse of divine law on the cross, that he also fell under the curse of human law. He was so condemned in God's eyes on the cross, that he was also condemned in man's eyes.

The tremors of the cross are being felt here. And he was so tormented on the cross, that he was tormented in his courtroom.

Verse 65, And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, prophesy, and the guards received him with blows.

[26:48] Look how they treated the Christ. Look how they treated the spotless lamb. Look how they treated their king. Spatter, mopped, the Pharisee, they say to him, prophesy, I thought you were the Christ, go on, prophesy.

And he was beaten, he was bruised. Our justice system today wouldn't even treat our worst criminals like this, yet look how they treat the Christ.

And again, how does Jesus respond? He takes it. we hear the silence again. And he takes it because he must take it.

And he must because this is how he saves his people. He's doing this for someone. He's doing this for the sake of his people, to ransom them from sin.

He's doing this for his people. And do you remember who's outside? It's Peter, the man who has just abandoned Jesus and run away from him. The man who in this courtyard denies Jesus.

[27:59] That sinner, Jesus is doing it all for him, to save Peter. And as we stand in that courtyard too, we can take our ears away from the window and realise this was all for us too.

we are all Peter in that courtyard. He did this for us. He took that sentence of condemned because that is our sentence.

We are the sinners and blasphemers who deserve death. And Jesus says, yes you do, but let me be condemned instead. He was silent for us.

Brothers and sisters, he did this for us. Condemned for us, spat on, for us, mocked, for us, beaten, for us, crucified, for us. The Christ was condemned in our place so that we can hear these glorious words.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Praise his name. Let me pray. Let me pray. Thank you.