

# Matthew 26:57-75

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[ 0 : 00 ] We could look at the courtroom characters. We could look at the failure of humanity. We could spend time looking at the failure of Jesus' disciples.

! But I don't want to do that. I want to take the camera and I want us to zoom in on the person of Jesus. And so then this morning there are four things about Jesus.

And then I want to tell you what not to think. And then I want to tell you what to think. All right? Four things about Jesus. First of all, he is innocent. He is innocent of the charges brought against him. We find ourselves, don't we, in the Jewish courtroom. It's a sort of pre-trial. It's not a legal trial by Jewish standards. But they bring Jesus in on a kind of nighttime pre-trial in order that the following day, 27 verse 1, can you see all the chief priests and the elders then turn up.

But this is the night before. 27 verse 1, they're going to hand him over to the Roman authorities because only the Roman authorities could give the verdict of guilty and death.

[ 1 : 12 ] And that's where they're heading. That's what these Jewish leaders wanted. Jesus dead. They've been scheming it from chapter 26. Can you just look there? Verses 3 and 4.

The chief priests and the elders of the people gather in the palace, the high court. This guy Caiaphas, he's there. And they plot together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth. And they want to kill him.

They want him dead. The trail begins in verse 57. But notice they've made up their mind before this. They wanted him dead. They were looking in verse 59. If you see there. The chief priests and the whole council are seeking false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death. So do you see what they're doing? They're looking for false evidence, pseudo evidence. Because there's no true evidence they could come up with. They were looking intently. It's the same word that Jesus uses in the parable of the hundred sheep.

[ 2 : 17 ] And the 99 are on the hillside. But one goes missing. And the shepherd starts looking intently for the one lamb. And so here that same word is used.

And these men are relentlessly pursuing Jesus looking for false evidence. But they couldn't find any. There is no presumption of innocent.

There is no innocent until proven guilty. But Jesus is innocent. You see that, don't you? Explicitly at the start of verse 60. They found none.

Though many false witnesses came forward. And finally these two false witnesses come forward. And they say, this fellow once said that he's able to destroy this temple and rebuild it in three days. And what they're doing is they are patchworking together some stuff they've heard about Jesus in the past. And they're turning it into a different idea. In fact, they misquote Jesus.

[ 3 : 18 ] Jesus does in fact say those words. John tells us that. Where Jesus says, I will destroy this temple. And we'll raise it in three days. But John tells us he was referring to his body.

And of course, Jesus' body, his temple, was raised on the third day. And they heard him say that.

And they probably thought, well, of course, he's not a lover of this great temple, this building.

Maybe they heard him say, this one day, this building, this temple, they thought, will be flattened.

So they cobbled together the story. And they come up with this idea that Jesus was referring to the bricks and mortar.

They have no idea what they're saying. They're just dragging out some mud and throwing it and hoping it will stick. And the high priest, in reply to this word, that fellow says he'll destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, comes to Jesus.

You can see him in verse 62. He's in his face, isn't he? There's a little bit of spit in the corner of his mouth, so to speak.

[ 4 : 25 ] And the high priest stood up and said, have you any answer to make? What is it that these men have against you? And at last, they think the mud is beginning to stick, but verse 63.

Jesus remained silent. He remains silent at the accusation. And Matthew wants you and I to see the innocence of Jesus in that they couldn't come up with anything.

It is all false evidence. But in this little word, remained silent, he wants us to see that although Jesus is innocent, he is secondly the suffering servant of God.

And the people that knew their Bibles, their Old Testament, would know that most famous passage, which we've looked at the last couple of weeks of Isaiah 53, the suffering servant. Innocent, though bearing our sin and guilt.

Guiltless, though becoming guilty. They understood the suffering servant. Perhaps it's lost on us.

But some 700 years before, the prophet talked of one who would take our pain, who would bear our suffering, punished by God, stricken and afflicted, pierced for our transgression, wounded for our iniquities.

[ 5 : 46 ] The punishment that would bring us peace with God was laid on him. And we all, like sheep, have gone astray. We've all turned to our own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb that's led to the slaughter and a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

And Matthew takes the highlighter pen, recording what happened here, that Jesus is silent, but Jesus is the suffering servant of the Lord. He is innocent.

Isaiah would go on to tell us that there was no guilt or deceit found in his mouth. He was innocent.

Matthew is screaming at you here, yes, he is innocent, but he is the suffering servant of God.

And not only that, but thirdly, he is the reigning and returning king of the cosmos. He is the reigning and returning king of the cosmos.

[ 6 : 52 ] Well, as I mentioned, Jesus is silent. It enrages the high priest, Caiaphas. The blood pressure rises. Look at verse 63. Jesus remains silent and the high priest said to him, I adjure you.

I charge you by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the son of the living God. It's the big guns come out. Tell us, are you the Messiah? Are you the long-awaited God's king?

Are you the king of the cosmos? Are you the king of the universe? Tell us. And Jesus says, verse 64, you said it. Yes. Before Caiaphas has the chance to say anything more, Jesus says, but I tell you, from now on, you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Make no mistake about what Jesus is claiming here. Jesus' claim here is massive. Whatever your view of Jesus is, you cannot avoid what Jesus is claiming about himself.

He is claiming to be God's king, the one to whom all authority and power has been given. And so these people who heard him, these people reading Matthew's gospel, would have understood the words, the son of man.

[ 8 : 16 ] And again, it can be a little bit lost on us because we don't understand our Bibles as well as they might have. And the title son of man is unpacked for us by Daniel in the Old Testament, where he tells us that the son of man was given authority, all authority and all power and sovereign power and all nations and all glory and people of every language will worship him.

And his dominion, his rule will be an everlasting dominion and his kingdom will be one that will never end and never be destroyed, the son of man. And Jesus is saying here, I am the Christ, I am the Messiah, I am the son of man.

We can't ignore this. So for a person to make such a claim about themselves, as C.S. Lewis said, would either make them a liar, he knows the truth, he knows he's not the son of man, he knows he's not the king, but he's just lying through his teeth, or it would make him a madman.

A madman wouldn't have a clue what he's saying. Or the third option is that he really is who he says he is.

And so you're left with this choice this morning, who is this Jesus? You might say it's just a fairy tale, but you cannot say that if you go and look at the historical documents.

[ 9 : 41 ] Don't go on hearsay, don't go on documentaries, go back to the evidence. It's not just the Bible, there were historians writing about this. And so Jesus makes this massive claim that he will come on the clouds, seated at the right hand of God, with all authority and all power.

And so this morning, Jesus either means everything, or nothing at all. If what he says is true, and he is God's anointed king, God's king, seated at the right hand, and coming on the clouds, and you and I will meet him, and he will be our judge, that means absolutely everything.

If that is true. If he's a liar, or a lunatic, it means nothing. I'm deluded. If he's a liar.

We're wasting our time this morning, if he's a liar. He either means everything, or nothing at all. And that is why, down through history, Jesus has polarized people.

People who love him, and see him as innocent, and see him as the suffering servant, who has taken my sin, and that he is God's king, and that he is returning, and he means everything to us, or there are people that say no.

[11:08] I don't want anything to do with him. And that's what happens in the courtroom, isn't it? Caiaphas is strongly antagonistic, verse 65. He tears his clothes.

He says, he's spoken blasphemy. He's called himself equal with God here. Why do we need any more witnesses? You've heard this blasphemy.

What do you think? Caiaphas says. What judgment do you make of him? And they reply, he is worthy of death. They come to that strong conclusion, that what Jesus is speaking about here, is absolute rubbish, and he is worthy of death.

The final picture in the text of Jesus, is the loving patience of Jesus, isn't it? He's a loving, innocent, suffering servant, reigning and ruling, returning king, and the loving patience of Jesus.

He's so patient with these people. And it's because, isn't it? It's all because he wants to be, above anything else, obedient to his father's plan, to come into our world, to live the perfect life, to be the spotless sacrifice for our sin, that you and I could be forgiven.

[12:27] And yet, his loving patience is seen, even with those who spit in his face, verse 67, who strike him with their fist. They blindfold him, and they hit him, and they say, tell us, who hit you?

Who slapped you? You are God's king, are you? Well, tell us who did that. We know, don't we, that he could have called 10,000 angels down, and yet he died alone.

He died for his people, for his elect, for you and for me. It's the loving patience, of a saviour, who dies in our place.

And God's patience, continues right down, to this very moment. And Jesus' patience, continues with all of us today. He's not yet returned, in the clouds, for what reason?

That you would hear, and that you would come to repentance, and that you would run from running your life, your way, to his way.

[13:39] And so that you would be ready, for him when he returns. Do you see his innocence? He is innocent. Do you see that he's taken our guilt? He is the suffering servant.

Do you see his reign, and rule, and return? And so submit to him, as Lord. And see his loving patience, continued even to this morning, to you, and to me.

To our friends. His patience to our city. To our world. That we would hear his call, that we would trust in his death, for our sins.

And so here's the application. I want to spend the rest of my time, on application. Look at verse 66. There's a great question there. The question is this, what's your judgment? The NIV puts it, what do you think?

I like that. What's your judgment? What do you think? They reply, don't they, he is worthy of death. I want you to answer this morning. He is worthy of your discipleship.

[14:45] He is worthy of you following him. And so I want to tell you, a number of things, that I don't want you to think. Do's and don'ts, about your thinking.

First of all, don't think that you can overthrow him. Look at verse 59. Caiaphas thought that, didn't he? He thought that he could dismiss, the tiresome Jesus, and that would be the end of him.

Political leaders have tried to do that throughout history, and they have failed, because the cause of Christ will not be overthrown. Verse 64, Jesus is clearly saying to his name, Caiaphas, you judge me now, I will judge you later.

You cannot overthrow him. Don't think that. Secondly, don't think that false witnesses, will ever be able to, disprove the claims, and teachings of Christ.

We see that in verse 60. Don't think that the claims, and people who, seeking to disprove the claims, and teachings of Christ, will never be able to do that.

[15:50] Nearly every year, there's a book brought out, isn't there? That's so, called disproves, that Jesus didn't really happen, or exist, or he had a wife and kids, or there's no resurrection, and it

blazes away, and then disappears.

False witnesses abound, they did then, and they do now, but they're no more successful. Jesus says, heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Thirdly, don't think that mockery, of Jesus, in verses 67 and verses 68, will prove to be anything, but contemptible.

It was then, and it is now. Those who spit in his face, who strike him with their fists, it seemed the right thing, for them to do.

People who use the name, of Jesus Christ, as a swear word, and because everyone does it, they think it's okay, it's in fact contemptible. Those who mock, the Lord Jesus Christ, in their comedy shows, and skits, don't think it's anything, other than contemptible.

[17:07] Fourth, don't think that you can follow, Jesus Christ at a distance, we're into next week's passage, but look at verse 58, 69, sorry, Peter is sitting outside, in the courtyard, sorry, and do look at verse 58, Peter was following him, at a distance.

It is, it is, it is, it is, the most miserable, and bitter experience, in the Apostle Peter's life, and you and I need to learn from that, that to follow Christ, at a distance, will always end in tears and woes.

Verse 57, don't think that you can trust, the religious establishment, you can always rely on them in this passage it's clear isn't it the high priests, the teachers of the law, the elders and often in history religious leaders have proven to be a broken crutch and we see that today don't we national leaders that are insipid that never say anything offensive they talk about Jesus but they talk about him as a weak pathetic figure pleading with you to be nice and don't put your faith in religious leaders yes they'll rage at political controversy but they will not expose sin and they will not call this nation to repentance and so do not put your trust in religious leaders or any man or even Presbyterian leaders surely Caiaphas is unlikely to be the last high priest who went wrong number six don't think that standing with the majority is a safe place and that standing with the majority will be okay with you 27 verse 1 look at the all in that word in 26 not everybody's there but in 27 everyone's arrived and it's a strong majority and a minority of one and if you want to be with the majority you want to go with the crowd you'll always be wrong because to be a Christian by its very nature means that you cannot be on the broad road that leads to destruction but you find yourself as a Christian on the narrow road do not think that staying with the majority is safe in our culture they must have thought that when they went home that night the family said where have you been well actually we've condemned Jesus to death everybody agreed with that it must be right it was unpleasant of course but we must be right it wasn't and so let me tell you how to think am I allowed to do that?

three things to think about first of all think about where Jesus Christ is today he is not on the cross he is not in the grave and he is not in the dock today right now Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God and he is the ruler of the universe and all authority has been given to him authority over me and authority over you and authority over Caiaphas and everyone else think about that and secondly think what will happen when you die I am always nervous about saying that I think we can misuse that and it can sound a little bit morbid it can sound like I am trying to manipulate you but the Christian view of death is very clear isn't it that we see Christ as judge he is appointed for men and women and boys and girls once to die and then to face the judgment and so that means that I will meet Christ and you will meet Christ isn't it and it's an alarming thing if Christ has only been on your lips but you've not believed in him in your heart and confessed him as Lord and so think where Christ is now think what will happen when you die and thirdly think about the reason why Christ went through all of this he went through all of this for our salvation and so today right now determine for yourself to enthrone him in your heart and in your life and do that today do that this morning what do you think what is your judgment he's worthy of death they answer what do you think is he worthy of your life your family and of your worship what do you think let's pray let's pray let's pray let's pray let's pray let's pray