

Mark 14:60-65

⁶⁰ And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?" ⁶¹ But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" ⁶² Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." ⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?" ⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. ⁶⁵ Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.

This is our second week on this text. We have seen the travesty of the whole process in Christ's so called trial. It was a miscarriage of justice from the second the process started. Even if we were simple men on the street, if we knew what was happening we would know that the person on trial was being treated unfairly, even if we knew nothing about Jesus at the time. You and I are rightly offended because Jesus is our superhero of all time. So we are indignant with how Jesus, who was so morally superior to everyone else, was treated by this mob of thugs. But even those who didn't know who He was would have been indignant with this power hungry group taking the law into their own hands. We will continue this morning looking at the last part of the text.

Look at verse 61. We see that Jesus kept silent. This is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 53:7 that says

Isaiah 53:7

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

Jesus did not remain silent during the whole trial, as we will see. But in this instant when the leadership was throwing accusations and questions at Him, He kept perfectly silent. Peter tells us a little more.

1 Peter 2:21-24

²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²² "*Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth*"; ²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

How hard it must have been to keep silent. Christ had the ability to say the wisest things in the hardest situations. He may have even been able to get out of this mess just by speaking. The leaders had given Christ a lot of ammunition to use in a severe rebuke. They had given Him a lot of critical material. But He holds his tongue.

In **Christ's example**, He was actually holding his tongue knowing that doing so would **GET Him** in trouble. That is not so true of us most of the time. How often holding our tongue would **keep us out** of trouble. Yes, we may see things that appear to be very true, usually about someone else. But does it really need said? Does all truth need revealed? Often if we just considered the other person's best interest for a little bit longer we would realize there is a lot of truth that does not need said. And it certainly doesn't need said in the instant we notice it. Jesus here shows great restraint with His tongue. He determines that **nothing should be said** so He says nothing. What an example to follow.

He was asked if **He was the Son of the Blessed**. That is profound. These religious leaders were **so religious**, that they held the name of God **so sacred**, and they would not allow it past their lips. Oh, they were **so very careful** with this religious conformity. Even in this trial they display their extreme religiosity. All the while they are trying wipe the Son of God, The Word of God, The Good Shepherd, The Redeemer, the very expression of God's character from the face of the earth. Be very careful to not confuse **religious expression** with **true spirituality**.

Religious expression might involve not touching and not tasting and not handling, like Colossians says. But true spirituality is an **all out war** with our sin nature. **Religion** would have these hypocrites being very careful in what word they use for God. **Spirituality** would have had them laying prostrate on the floor asking the Son of the Blessed to forgive them for their pride and arrogance and greed. We can't tell spirituality in us and others by the number of rules they have. We can tell true spirituality best when **what God wants** conflicts with **what we feel we must have**, and **we choose what God wants**. That is the kind of power that true spirituality exerts. These guys knew nothing of true spirituality. When Christ finally speaks this is what He says.

⁶² **Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."** ⁶³

The first thing to note here is that Christ did not hesitate to proclaim that He truly is the Messiah. He is the Son of God that was to come. He avoided that proclamation during much of His ministry. There are two reasons that come to mind for that. The **first** is that He did not want to be associated with people's **wrong expectations** about what the Messiah would be and do. He did not want people to think He was going to do a political takeover of the Roman

Government. People would mistakenly think they were **helping** Christ's cause when they were really **hindering** it, much like Peter was known to do.

The **second** reason is that Christ would have had His ministry interrupted by the religious leaders sooner if He was openly proclaiming that He was the Messiah. They would have gathered witnesses that would testify that He said that He was the Messiah, and that would have been enough in the leader's minds to kill Him right then. So Christ had been slow to make open proclamations.

There are some so called "Bible scholars" who use Christ's hesitancy to proclaim Himself the Messiah to try to prove that He **never claimed** that He was the Messiah or the Son of God. But this text is very difficult for them to explain. Here is the time where Christ could have easily said, "No, I am not the Son of God" and it would have gotten Him immediately off the hook. Christ had no self serving reason at all to proclaim His Lordship in this trial. But He did it anyway. Why? **Jesus IS Lord** and it is time to die to accomplish the Messiah's mission.

What Christ said is a combination of two old testament passages.

The first is from Daniel.

Daniel 7:13-14

¹³ "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.

Psalms 110:1

¹ The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

The leaders who heard this would have understood where Christ's statement was coming from. They would have been familiar with the context. The Daniel passage was understood to be Messianic.

It is interesting that Jesus immediately replaces the title the Pharisees used, Son of the Blessed One, with the one that Jesus preferred, Son of Man. Both would have been understood as Messianic. I suspect that it had to do with what they were going to accuse Christ of. **Blasphemy is ascribing to man what is God's.** It is a **defiant irreverence of God.** But look at the phrase describing the Messiah. A son of Man. He is a man. He is God's man. He is God in flesh. That is the very thing that these guys could not accept. But Christ points to the scripture that refers to God that way. Maybe Christ was intending them to see the point that they most need to reconsider in their theology. **Scripture refers to Christ exactly as Christ referred to Himself.**

And you will see the Son of Man- (Daniel passage) sitting at the right hand of the Power (Psalms passage), and coming with the clouds of heaven."(Daniel Passage)

Now, keep in mind these leaders would have known the context these quotes were coming from. **The Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven** is going to be given **absolute authority in a future Kingdom of God's** that will be a global Kingdom. He will rule the world. And He will rule forever.

Jesus, by using the quote He used, was saying clearly that **He was the one that was going to absolutely rule all people forever.**

Then the Psalm passage refers to God making Christ's enemies a footstool for Christ to rest His feet on. The passage is essentially saying that God, personally, will subdue all of Christ's enemies. They will be absolutely under the power of the Son of Man.

These leaders should have been scared out of their minds. The way Jesus worded this He was telling the leaders **that it is they** who will be standing in a court and it **will be Christ** who is the judge. It is Christ who will have all authority to do to His enemies anything He desires. His enemies will be absolutely powerless under His rule. This should have caused a shudder to go up the spine of these enemies of Christ. Their hair should have stood on end. The fear of the Lord could have been the beginning of wisdom for them. But it wasn't. At all.

Instead of being afraid, what Christ said made them angry. Who does this Galilean think He is? We are the powers that be. We are God's men. Christ should be bowing to us. **We will never** bow to Him. That is evidently what they thought. Because what **Christ said** did not even **give them pause** in what they were going to do next. They didn't adapt to what Christ said. They didn't adjust to it or take it in. And we think them utter wicked fools. But what about us?

Do we honestly believe in our heart of hearts that Jesus Christ will one day arrive in the clouds? Do we honestly think that He will Judge the earth? Do we believe that He will separate the sheep and the goats? And that for an eternity he will reward those who believed in Him and punish those who rebelled against Him? And of course, before we answer that question we have to ask the question, Well how could a person tell if they believed it or not? And the answer is that those **who really believe that truth** are going to live radically different lives.

If we believe in this eternal global reign of Christ, we will act like Christ truly does have the authority to tell us what to do. And we will submit to Him because we know two things. **We will face Him in judgement** and **He will reward us for faithfulness.** If we really believe in this coming kingdom, we will be storing treasure up there. We will invest in our best interest. To the degree we do that, to the degree that we are obedient and look to the next life for our reward, we can see we believe that truth. Also we will live to **please Christ** rather than living

to **please ourselves**. When Christ forbids something, we avoid it. When He commands us to do something, we do it. Why? Because He is Lord and we trust Him. Obeying Him is worth our while. Disobeying Him is dangerous and foolish. Because He is real. And the future is certain.

It is an interesting image Christ creates in this passage. Christ is stated as both sitting and coming. I am not sure how that will work out. But the idea you get is that this is not something Christ is struggling to do. He sits while His Father works. His rule is not in question. It is an absolute certainty.

And even though these leaders were not afraid, they one day will be. Oh they will be. Anyone who mocks God will be afraid one day. When we see the people on tv or on the internet mocking God, we should be stricken with the realization that these people will one day be very very afraid in front of the one they have mocked. They have spoken in authoritative tones in their criticism of even the idea of God, and they will, from their knees, be forced to admit that it truly is Jesus Christ who is Lord and King of the universe. And all of the pride and arrogance of their so called knowledge will be proven what it is in that admission of Christ's Lordship.

That is the world that is coming. It is not just a doctrine. It is not just a belief. It is a future reality whether we believe it or not. We would all do very very well to prepare for this certain future date. And we do well to warn others to prepare as well.

And we should always remember that **God is never on trial by His mockers**. It is **the mockers who are on trial before God**. No matter how it might look right now.

Mark 14:63-64

⁶³ **Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?"** ⁶⁴ **You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.**

The only time the High Priest was allowed to tear his clothes was for blasphemy. And just like the careful attention to the word chosen to describe God, now we have great religiosity over the outrage for the reputation of God. What a show of religion while killing the Son of God. We can't let this lesson escape. Don't let religion fool you. It is often fueled by the devil. No matter how robustly sincere it may look.

Here are men who are **condemning Christ** for **blasphemy** and they are all guilty of **the greatest blasphemy** a man can commit. They are denying the Son of God. Then these leaders go on to condemn Christ. They are doing it based on Christ's confession. The only question they fail to deal with is, **Is Christ guilty of blasphemy?** This should have been a very serious question. But since the leaders were in charge of a godless religion, there can be no possibility in their minds of

God showing up, in a man or otherwise. Had these guys checked out the claims of Christ against the scriptures, they would have found out that Christ was not guilty of blasphemy. He was, however, guilty of interrupting the cash flow in the Annas family business of ripping off worshippers. And that is, more than likely, the main reason Annas wanted Him dead. Christ was threatening the leader's power and money. A lot of people find themselves dead over those sorts of issues.

Evidently no one in this lot stood up for Christ. They should have, even if over nothing more than protocol. But they did not.

The other thing to note here is that normally when a vote was taken it was taken in a very precise way. The votes started with the youngest and went to the oldest. They were taken one at a time. We see none of that on this night. This is a courtroom of the devil and they are going by His rules. "Don't think about it. Just do it."

Mark 14:65

⁶⁵ Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" (mt- Who is the one who struck you?) And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.

Look at what comes out of these men. Here they are, supposedly representing God. And how do they act? Like the devil himself. It is a sad thing that those institutions claiming to be churches have often housed leadership of this kind. It is what religion produces.

These men began walking up to Christ and spitting in His face. Let me ask you. Can you imagine a more dangerous activity to do on this earth? I would rather be cleaning up a radiation spill than doing this. Here are the guys claiming to **rule for God** spitting in **the face of God**. There may not be a greater insult to a person than spitting in their face. It conveys contempt that goes off the charts.

We have an interesting example of it in the Old Testament. The context is a man whose brother has died and this man is not willing to marry his brother's wife.

Deuteronomy 25:8-10

⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him (the brother) and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,' ⁹ then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.' ¹⁰ And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'

Depending upon the wife, that insult of being spit on once might be a small price to pay. But nonetheless, this would have been a very severe insult. The insult, itself, was intended to be great enough incentive to take on a lifelong commitment to this woman.

So we know that the leaders in our text knew what they were doing. They were intentionally showing contempt to Christ.

But they are doing far more than that.

Now they play a wicked game with Christ. They cover Christ's eyes. And now they make a mockery of what Christ has just said. He said that He will essentially judge the whole earth, including His present audience. Now they make fun of the very idea of it. They cover Christ's eyes and they slug him. Then they mockingly tell Him to judge. He is the prophesy who was doing this evil brutality. What these mockers did not know is that Christ knew every one of them. And if they did not repent before they died, they will stand in front of this Judge. But he is not going to mock them. He is going to cast them into hell. And given that there appear to be varying degrees of punishment, I would not want to be in their shoes. How would you want to be in front of Christ as one who mocked His Godhood?

Then as the Sanhedrin tired of this game they turned Christ over to the officers, to the temple police. And what do they do to this innocent man? **And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.**

Think about this. None of this was necessary. None of it was prescribed. In fact it was probably forbidden. But that doesn't matter. It is like what happens on city streets when the lights go out. **Opportunity for evil** usually results in displays of evil. It isn't very complicated. These guys are simply showing what they are.

They were given an opportunity to sin and sin is what they do. They had probably been wanting to do this **to someone**. Now they have their chance. No one is going to get the in trouble for beating Christ around a bit.

Evidently they keep their hands open as they slap Christ. You can almost hear the smacks as humanity gets their licks into God. They show what they think of their creator. This is a perfect picture of what us in our flesh truly think of the one true God. Smack. Smack. Smack.

Carla brought up the other day how our kids didn't really know how to take the world when they finally made their way into it. A lot of the unbelievers seemed to be very kind. You might even call them loving. They were friendly. They didn't seem all that sinister. And that evaluation is correct on much of their behavior. There are very nice acting people in our world. Some are more moral than many Christians. But at the heart of who they are, they are either for or against God. And their capacity to do evil things is just limited by their opportunities or incentives. These temple police may have been good family men. But in this environment, where evil was encouraged, these men may have done things they never thought they would do. The thing we need to remember is we can never trust the goodness of unregenerate human beings. We can be thankful that they do so many helpful things. But we must never be fooled about the spiritual condition of their souls. They are always opportunities for us to minister the truth

and love of Christ to. But Christ did not come for the righteous. He only calls sinners to repentance.

In closing, one easy application is one we have referred to earlier.

Do we really believe and live as if **we will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.**

Think about the application of that. What do we live for? Here and now? Or then? What difference does that make in our lives? What difference SHOULD it make? What difference is there between us and the rest of the world other than attending this meeting on Sunday mornings? We should have answers to that question. We should be able to point to areas that would be used as evidence if the court were trying to convict us of being Christians. How we use our money, our time, our relationships... What does it reflect of our belief in God?

We would do well to consider that this week.

What we have just read is probably the darkest night in human history. It is the greatest miscarriage of justice in human history. It is the worst display of religious leadership in human history.

All of these things are true. I don't think they could be argued against. But what did God use all of this for?

God used this night to prepare for the brightest light in human history, the greatest goodness in human history, the most profound display of grace in human history, and the primary source of hope in human history.

It is Friday, but Sunday is coming.