

Luke 22:66-23:16

The Cross Our Only Hope (Part 2)

Intro: Some clarifying remarks on something from last week.

- First, I'm thankful that people listen carefully. I welcome questions and clarification anytime.

I had a few questions about the “falling away” of Judas. I noted how Judas is a warning that any disciple can fall away.

- What I don't mean is that a person can reverse salvation or lose salvation. Falling away simply means that the person was never born again in the first place.
- The apostle John has a category for this:
(Jn 6:66) “after this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.” (also 1 Jn 2:19)
- That's not the same as saying a believer can be saved one moment and not the next.

1689 Baptist Confession—the summary of doctrine I most closely align with.

Ch 17 Perseverance (17:1)

Those God has accepted in the Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect can neither totally nor finally fall from a state of grace. They will certainly persevere in grace to the end and be eternally saved, because the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable.

If God has given the gift of salvation, he does not take it back.

There are some weeks when death is more in front of us. This was one of those weeks. Several things happened.

1. I was driving to my house during lunch hour on Monday and was stuck on Broad River Rd. Turned out there was a fatal accident on I-26 and traffic was rerouted.
2. I attended a funeral on Wednesday. (Ecclesiastes 7:2) “It's better to go to a house of mourning, than a house of feasting.
3. Even this morning, I woke up to the news of 2 mass shooting in the US (El Paso, TX and Dayton, OH).

“I'm a dying man preaching to dying men.” —Richard Baxter

—The focus of our text today is on the trials (Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod) that precede the cross.

Christ brings certain truths to these trials that help us love and appreciate the cross.

1) Christ brings truth to the trial (22:66-71)

- The first detail we get is that it is a new day (v66).
- This was the most important day in all of history. No day is both darker and at the same time paradoxically more hopeful.
- We need to realize that no Gospel account gives us the whole story. We need to piece them together.

Jesus had several informal trials at night. Jews could not deliver a death sentence at night, so they needed day to come.

- At daybreak, a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin (Jewish court) comes together.
- The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish court in Israel. It was made up of 70 men—Sadducees, Pharisees, elders—and the high priest sat as president.

The Sanhedrin asks Jesus a question: Are you the Christ (Messiah)?

- In this interrogation, Jesus brings two truths. They both deal with Jesus's control-authority.

A. Jesus's rule and return (Dan. 7:13, Ps. 110:1)

- The quote is from Ps 110. The title *Son of Man* is drawn from Dan. 7:13.
- Both texts, applied to Jesus, stress his authority to judge and rule.
- Who is really doing the judging? It may appear to be the Jewish court—but in reality, the defendant is the judge.
- In other words, Jesus has the right to sit in *ultimate judgment—the One that deals out eternal life and death sentences*.
- The truth also speaks of Jesus's enthronement after the cross and resurrection.
- The Daniel passage hints at Jesus's return. Not only does Jesus have all power, *but he will be seen again*.

We also see the sovereignty of Jesus in this. Jesus is the Savior who is sovereign. All authority on heaven and earth are his (Mt 28:18).

The point is, Jesus will be vindicated as the Messiah. Even if people condemn him, the truth is God vindicates him.

**Think also of the irony in this moment. The Sanhedrin stared in the face of the One who would be their *eternal judge*.

Apply: It is possible to be so spiritually dull and jaded that you can stand before Jesus, see nothing and feel nothing. That's an awful place to be in. Spiritual complacency is frightening.

B. He is the Son of God (71)

- First, most Jews did not see the Messiah as divine. They saw Messiah as an agent of God, not God himself. —Jesus does not deny he has the attributes and authority of God.
- This is enough of a confession to secure a conviction. It's the nail in the coffin...or more appropriately, the nail in the cross.

Sum: Truth can be deadly. The truth cost Jesus his life.

You may have heard of the liar, lunatic, or Lord trilemma (three alternatives).

Most think CS Lewis came up with it, but actually it can be traced to a Scottish preacher, John Duncan

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/is-c-s-lewiss-liar-lord-or-lunatic-argument-unsound/>.

1. Liar—Jesus intentionally lied or was a fraud.
2. Lunatic—Jesus was self-deceived.
3. Lord—He is who he says he is—Son of God.

If you go with option 3, how does your life reflect that? If I say, Donald Trump is the President, it is true, yet it does not affect my life tons. Some of his policy will at some level. But if I say Jesus Christ is Lord, it changes everything what I do, how I live, what I live for *each moment*.

Jesus says something critical in v67: “If I tell you, you will not believe.”

Having the truth is not enough. Having questions answered is not enough either. At the end of the day, *belief* is what really matters.

2) Christ brings fulfillment to the trial (23:1-12)

- The Jews did not have the authority to execute a person, so they had to send Jesus to Pilate.

- He is the Roman Prefect, he has the main administrative role of maintaining law and order.
- Pilate does not care about blasphemy laws—he cares if Jesus is an enemy of the state. Is he a political threat?
- So, the Jews have to come up with blatantly false charges like “Jesus is telling people not to pay taxes” (v2).
- Once Pilate finds that Jesus is from Galilee, he sends him to Herod Antipas.
- In vs8-11 we see how Herod related to Jesus. It’s actually a picture of what some people do with Jesus.
- Herod is glad and hopes that Jesus will show something earth shattering (v8).
- But Jesus sat *silently* by.

When Jesus did not deliver and meet Herod’s expectations, he simply dismisses Jesus.

Apply: What happens when Jesus does not meet our expectations? So many relational problems begin with unmet expectations. And that also happens in the faith. Jesus has not promised to do things on our terms, but his. That’s what it means to confess his Lordship.

***If we come to Jesus for any reason other than a desire to know God, have our sins forgiven, follow him—we will be thoroughly disappointed.*

Jesus does not exist to entertain us. He exists to be trusted and worshiped by us.

Even in this situation, Jesus is fulfilling what the OT prophesies about the Messiah

1 (v9)—His silence (Is 53:7-8) “he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.”

2 (v11)—The mockery (Ps 22:6) “scorned by mankind and despised by the people.”

3 (v12)—A unlikely friendship (Ps 2:2). There is the ancient proverb that the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

That was true with Herod and Pilate. They found a common ground.

- But it’s more that an ancient proverb; it’s a fulfillment of scripture. (Ps 2:2) “the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed.”

There is a final part of Jesus’s fulfillment. Fulfilling the demand of God’s perfect justice.

The trial was a total train-wreck of human justice, but a perfect fulfillment of God’s justice.

3) Christ brings innocence to the trial (23:13-16)

- Interestingly, Pilate and Herod both conclude Jesus is innocent.

- That's a *main theme* Luke stresses in Jesus' trial.

"I did not find this man guilty, neither did Herod." Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him."
Pilate passes his sentence: Jesus is innocent. He is spotless.

- Matthew records how Pilate's wife was troubled (Mt 27:19)

¹⁹ Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "*Have nothing to do with that righteous man*, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.

She speaks deep theological truth about Jesus.

(1 Pet 2:22) "He committed no sin, neither was there deceit found in his mouth."

(1 Pet 3:18) "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God."

It's critical that we see Jesus as spotless & sinless. There is in fact no gospel without it. A sinner cannot save sinners.

Conclusion:

What happened at the cross has been called the great exchange. In other words, Jesus did not just meet some unfortunate fate. We don't read the Gospel and merely feel bad that Jesus was a victim of a corrupt circumstance. No, this was God's justice being fulfilled.

We look at the cross and say: Jesus has something that I don't. Jesus has something I need. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God has *innocence*.

It appears that Jesus's trial was full of injustice—and it certainly was. But pull back the curtain and we see the drama of God's salvation play out.

We need to consider Pilate's wife's statement. "Have nothing to do with this righteous man." The question is: what are you doing with this righteous man? In light of the truth, no one can ignore Jesus. He can't be written off. Do you believe him? Worship him? Are you clothed with his righteousness by faith? O what a precious truth...that when God looks at us through Christ, he sees *innocence*.

Bless him for the Great Exchange. Bless him for his perfect justice. Bless him for the cross, our only hope.